

RAZZORCAKE

#15

\$3 TURBONEGRO FEEDERZ
KNOCKOUT PILLS JOHN E. MINER
POLITICAL SCANDALS YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS! 

John E. Miner



I got an email from an old friend the other day, and he said to me, "I hear you've gone all political. Don't tell me those bastards have gone and made you give a shit. DAMN THEM..." It made me think.

I'm not all that political of a person. Most of the time, I'd rather talk about anything – music, books, zines, drinking, skateboarding, surfing, riding my bike, psychological profiles of my friends, movies, anything – than politics. Todd's the same way. Most of the *Razorcake* writers are the same way. That's why we produce a punk rock magazine instead of a political magazine.

Things change.

It's starting to look like Pinky and the Brain have managed to slide into the White House (as in, "What do you want to do today, Cheney?" "Same thing we do every day, George: try to take over the world.") So much of our money and so many of our freedoms are being ripped away from us so quickly that it's suddenly feeling like we have to act in some way, or be sorry that we didn't. The tough thing is to figure out what to do.

A few months ago, I read an article on George Seldes in *Barracuda* #15. He was a reporter back in a time when reporters went out and found stories and wrote about them, rather than just rewording press releases (which is pretty much all that reporters do now). When he got frustrated with the stories that his editors chose to run and the ones they chose to kill, he started his own weekly, *In Fact*. *In Fact* survived for years, and Seldes relied on submissions

by reporters who were in a unique position to write about various important but ignored stories. When I finished reading the article, I thought, damn, that makes me want to be an editor of an underground magazine. Luckily, I already had that part covered. Then I thought, I wish I knew some reporters in a unique position to cover ignored stories. As fate would have it, Todd and I did have two friends approach us with story ideas for this issue. One works at Planned Parenthood, and she wanted to write about how a woman's right to choose is being stolen by the Bush administration. The other fellow writer was in a convenient, inside position to talk about how corporate CEOs and public servants tend to be the exact same people, and public policy reflects this. Of course Todd and I were interested in these articles. And suddenly, without even trying, *Razorcake* #15 started to look a little bit like an old *In Fact*.

Does this mean that we've gone all political? Not really. Life and society around us is forcing us to get more involved, and, when we're in a good position to cover something, we'll cover it. But don't worry. The dick and fart jokes are still here. We still have all the usual talk about music, books, zines, drinking stories, and so on. We've just added another sixteen pages so that we can fight back against the Pinky and the Brain mentality. So please take a little extra time to check out our articles as well as our music. And, to paraphrase *Razorcake* reviewer Not Josh, be smarter than your TV.

—Sean

AD DEADLINE FOR ISSUE #16

August 1st, 2003

AD DEADLINE FOR ISSUE #17

October 1st, 2003

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Sean <sean@razorcake.com>

Todd <retodd@razorcake.com>

Rich Mackin

<richmackin@richmackin.org>

Nardwuar

<nardwuar@nardwuar.com>

Designated Dale

<DesignatedDale@aol.com>

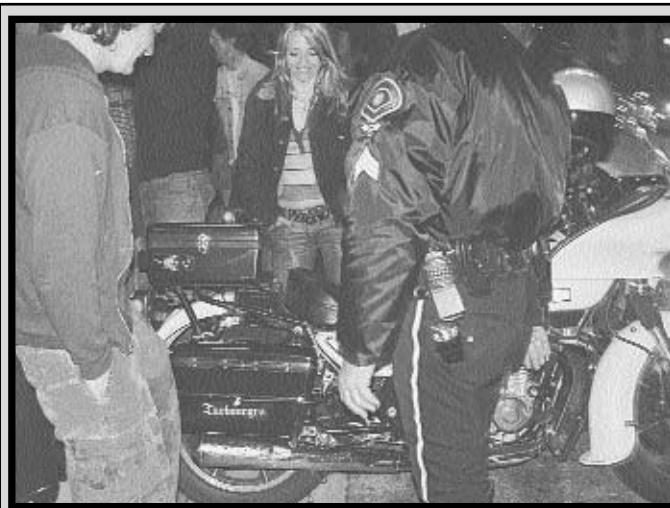
Rhythm Chicken

<rhythmchicken@hotmail.com>

Everyone else can be reached c/o
Razorcake.

Razorcake and razorcake.com are reared and smeared by:
Sean Carswell, Todd Taylor, Felizon Vidad, Megan Pants,
ktspin, and Skinny Dan.

Cover design by John E. Miner, cover photo by Dan Monick



CHP: *Erection!* (Even cops like Turbonegro.)

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thanks to Randy Iwata for handling the tech stuff with Nardwuar's column; ear-scorching, shit-under-the-fingernails, digging for diamonds in the rough thanks to Aphid Peewit, Cuss Baxter, Donofthedeath, Jeff Fox, Not Josh, Mike Beer, Puckett, and Toby for doing record reviews; you can't pan books in one sentence, like records, thanks to Not Josh for his book review; reading people's personal tragedy thanks to Aphid and Joe Biel for zine reviews; Todd would like to thank Erik and Gretchen, Paddy, Lane, Rainer, Andy, Billy, and the entire Triple Rock Social Club crew for making his trip out to Minneapolis feel like he was some sort of duct tape royalty; and, finally, isn't it always the case thanks to the Slave Labor Stuffing Crew, of which I lost the note of who was here, your toil was in anonymity, and the inserts got stuffed in record time.

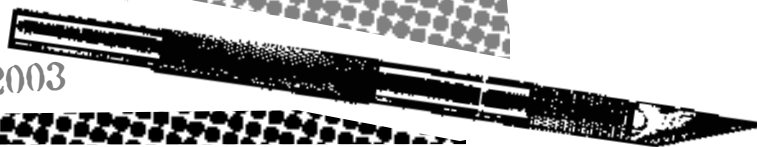
RAZZORCAKE



www.razorcake.com * PO Box 42129, Los Angeles, CA 90042

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Money

Lazy Mick



A metalhead, a mariachi and me! Were accordion players mariachi? I would find out. Daisy and I would save punk rock. We would save it with this accordion.



TIJUANA BLUES

Continued from #14...

Weeks was astounded by the story of my first trip to TJ. The next day he made me tell it over and over again, peppering me with questions until I'd revealed every detail. He was so impressed he invited me to join his hardcore band, F.O.N.O. (Friends of No One). I was the second member. When I accepted I decided not to tell him how disappointing the actual intercourse was, and that I didn't get off until I started thinking about my ex-girlfriend.

"Fuck it," he said, "let's go."

"Go where?"

"TJ!"

"No way."

"My balls are so blue I look like a smurf."

"So you go."

"Come on. We'll hit some dance clubs. Do it right. None of that pervy shit."

"It wasn't like that."

"Right, I'm sure she was really special. Heart-shaped ass. Pussy made of gold."

"Easy, Jealous."

"Come on. We'll hook up with some freaky college girls."

"What about the curse?"

"Don't tell me you believe in that shit?"

"No, but --"

"You could be on a roll, but you're never going to find out if you stay here listening to these motherfuckers break wind all night."

He had a point. I'd just gotten paid and it seemed like a waste of a Friday night to stay on the ship.

"All right," I said. "Let's go."

We got our asses in gear. Shit, shower, shave. Trolley, TJ, taxi. An hour later we were standing outside a dilapidated pink stucco building that had a dance club on the second floor. We could hear the bass thumping from the street.

Halfway up the stairs, Weeks stopped to chop up some lines on a pocket mirror. He split the brownish clump into two rails and we snorted them in the stairwell. Fortified, we resumed our ascent. As we made our way up the stairs, we heard something we couldn't put our finger on. The sound of a carousel going double time? A massive grandfather clock chiming backward? The higher we went, the more intense the sound became. What the fuck was it?

We threw open the doors and walked into the place, bold as outlaws. We were the only white people in the club. A few heads swiveled our way. The music was so ear-splittingly loud we knew we had to stay. A corpulent doorman appeared and shouted something at us. Weeks tried to give him some money, but he wouldn't take it. He didn't want to let us in. While Weeks negotiated with him, I watched the stage and determined the source of the noise: a gorgeous Latin woman dressed all in black hammered away at an accordion nearly half her size. After intense negotiations, the man at the door let us in.

"What was that all about?"

"I don't know."

"What did you tell him?"

"I told him the accordion player was our cousin."

"You evil genius!"

"Tell me about it! I think I cracked the code."

"How's that?"

"You have to out-Mexican the Mexicans."

"How do you do that?"

"You refer to everyone as 'my friend.' Over and over again. 'Yes, my friend. No, my friend.'"

We went to the bar, grateful for the speed that made us so smooth and suave. We ordered beer and tequila. They served it with salt and lime, which we ignored with savage contempt.

"Wouldn't it be great," Weeks said, "if instead of licking salt off our hands we snorted lines

instead?"

I told him that would indeed be great, but I was pretty sure I'd seen it done in a movie, only with better drugs and better-looking actors.

"This," he said with an expansive gesture to indicate the bar, the dance club, all of Tijuana, "is a fucking movie!"

I nodded and tried to chew a hole in my lip.

We sat down at a table near the stage directly in front of the accordion player. It was like sitting before a blast furnace. Weeks's mouth moved, but I couldn't hear a word he said. It forced me to look at him a little closer. His skin was pale except for the deep, dark circles under his eyes, as if someone had taken his eyeballs for a joyride and did donuts in his eye sockets. His hair was greasier than usual and he kept gnawing at his fingernails, which he'd bitten down as far as they could go. I wondered how many days Weeks had gone without sleep. Two? Three? I decided I didn't want to know.

We were blown away by the accordion. It was a miraculous machine. The name "DAISY" was spelled out with fake emeralds. All the sadness in the world was trapped in that glowing green box. The two rows of piano keys were like teeth. The speckled metallic green squeezebox gleamed under the house lights that switched from green to blue to red. Wires dangled and disappeared. Daisy had that sucker amplified.

Weeks cupped his hand and bellowed in my ear.

"We got to get one of those for the band!"

"Definitely!"

If we had an accordion like that our band would be something special. It would lend a certain weight to the songs about drugs and insane asylums and punk rockers going wild in the streets I planned to write. It was the sad, confused crossover era of punk

and heavy metal, and metal had gotten the upper hand. But we'd change all that with an accordion, and not just any accordion, but *this* accordion. I concocted a plan: we'd pool our money and buy the accordion from Daisy, or better yet, buy it and then pay Daisy to teach us how to play it, or best of all, we'd invite her into the band. A metalhead, a mariachi and me! Were accordion players mariachi? I would find out. Daisy and I would save punk rock. We would save it with this accordion.

The music stopped and Daisy unstrapped herself from the machine and laid it in a case lined with green felt. To our great astonishment, she stepped daintily down from the stage and joined us at our table.

"You will buy me a tequila?"

"I'll get it!" Weeks shouted.

He couldn't get out of his chair fast enough. Daisy removed a compact from a small pouch and fixed her face while I tried not to stare at her.

"How do you want your tequila?" Weeks called from the bar. His voice boomed in the quiet dance hall.

"Straight up," she said in a voice that was barely loud enough for me to hear. I relayed the message.

"Silly boy."

"The silliest," I agreed.

"Do you boys?" – and here she hesitated, waited for me to catch up and then plunge headfirst into the rift she had created in the conversation – "like to party?"

"Oh yes," I assured her, as if such a thing in such a place could possibly be in doubt. "We definitely like to party."

"Good." She zipped her pouch shut and gave me the full measure of her glistening lips. "I like to party, too."

I pretty much fell in love with Daisy on the spot.

Weeks arrived with three shots of tequila. He set them down on the table and ran off again. Daisy

dipped her finger in the shot glass, lifted it to her mouth, and sucked.

"You will party with me?"

I jerked my head as fast I could. If my heart beat any faster I was going to levitate out of my chair. I couldn't believe Weeks was missing all the good stuff. He came back with three longnecks and sat down in his torn faux-leather chair.

"She likes to party," I said.

"Right on."

"Did you boys bring anything to party with?"

I didn't quite understand what she meant, but Weeks did. "Yeah," he said. "Is there some place we can go? Your dressing room, maybe?"

"This is my dressing room."

"Where then?"

"Right here."

"Here?"

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I didn't think I would be able to party with Daisy in front of Weeks, and I was pretty sure I didn't want to watch Weeks party with Daisy. Weeks pulled out his stash and pocket mirror. He looked around for sign of the bouncer or bartender. Daisy zeroed in on Weeks's meth as if it was only thing that mattered in the universe. Oh, I thought, that kind of party. I wasn't sure if I was relieved or disappointed.

Weeks started chopping up some lines. The bouncer made his way to the table. Weeks made the meth disappear. Daisy fumbled with my cigarettes. The bouncer slashed his finger across his neck and jerked his thumb at the door. Then he turned and walked toward the bar. I was confused. Was he going to kill us, throw us out, or buy us another round?

"Give me the drugs," Daisy said.

Weeks balked.

"Oscar is calling the police. Give it to me and go. Hurry."

Weeks gave up his bag, and then he gave her the mirror, too.

"Thank you," I said.

Daisy smiled. She put her palms on my cheeks and kissed me on the lips. A tingle went through me. I'd always wanted to be kissed like that. Always, always. I stood, my heart beating like a kick drum, and it occurred to me she'd given me the kiss desperados got when they were on their way to the firing squad. She tried to kiss Weeks, but he refused. He was still bitter about losing his stash, the dickhead.

"Goodbye, boys."

We ran down the long flight of stairs and hit the streets, expecting to be surrounded by Federales waving pistols and truncheons, but the streets were empty save

for the puddle of vomit I had just stepped in. I didn't feel like such a desperado anymore; I felt like a twerp with stinky shoes.

"That skeeving whore ganked our crank!"

"At least she warned us about the cops," I said.

"There were no cops, you tard. It was a scam. She *played* us."

"How much did you have left?"

"Enough to last the night."

"So much for out-Mexicaning the Mexicans."

We walked the streets, looking for the next place to party. It had rained while we were inside the club with Daisy, but now the skies were clear again. The rain in Tijuana smelled like the rain anywhere else. The neon lights reflected off of the slick surfaces, making the walk seem more dramatic than it was. Weeks was right: Tijuana was a movie.

We found an open doorway, a stairwell splashed with red light, music coming from someplace we couldn't see. We backed into the street to see if we could see a sign but there was no sign to see. We nodded in mute agreement and went up the cramped, narrow stairwell. If someone wanted to come down they would have to wait. We reached the top of the stairs and stepped into a close, low-ceilinged room. The place was empty. A DJ wearing headphones fiddled with his equipment. A row of cocktail tables and stools were pressed up against the walls. The drywall was wallpapered with Corona posters featuring brown-skinned bikini models striking lurid poses with their sweaty bottles of golden beer crowned with yeasty foam. It felt like being inside a high school football player's locker.

"This blows," I said.

"Tell me about it."

We turned to leave and heard girls' voices coming up the stairwell. We overruled ourselves and decided to stay. Weeks and I were on the same page, as long we didn't have to talk to one another.

The girls' laughter preceded them up the stairs. Three blondes spilled into the room, each prettier than the next.

"Ohmygod! It's so cute!"

"It's like Barbie's playhouse!"

"With a couple of Kens!"

While I was trying to figure out if they were talking about us, and if so, what to do about it, Weeks was at the bar in a flash ordering a round of drinks.

"Drinks for my dolls!"

I cringed, but the girls laughed. They were from SDSU or maybe it was UCSD. I told



This artwork comes from a flyer for a hooker in Tijuana. John E. Miner used it on a poster. We stole it from that.

them we were in the Navy and Weeks added this was our last night of liberty before our ship set sail for the perils of the Persian Gulf. Weeks could be as slow-witted as they come. I'd once caught him using a pneumatic sander on the fiberglass surface of a motor whaleboat. He gouged out a two-foot section of the gunwale, and when he was done it looked like the boat had melted under intense heat.

We drank beers, shots, more beers, more shots. We included the DJ in on the fun and he let us play whatever records we wanted. We started to dance. Our flesh filled the room. The music was a presence pulsing through the dance floor that flexed beneath our weight. The walls shook and the Corona girls vibrated in ecstasy. The temperature shot up twenty degrees and our bodies glistened with sweat.

I was having the time of my life. But it was the off night, the cursed night, the night things were fated to go bad. When the music stopped, the girls dragged us down the stairs to their cars and told us they'd drive us back to the base. Weeks and I ended up in the back seat with two of the girls, legs, lips and torsos spread every which way. The girls were eager

to send us out to sea with fond memories of home. By the time we crossed the border, I'd made out with both girls. The tops came off in San Ysidro, belts unbuckled in Chula Vista, and the elastic in our underwear was put to the test in National City. Peering through

I'd always wanted to be kissed like that. Always, always. I stood, my heart beating like a kick drum, and it occurred to me she'd given me the kiss desperados got when they were on their way to the firing squad.

the steamed-up windows I marveled at how quickly the trip had passed; I was so distracted I had no recollection of showing my ID to the guards at the gate, yet there was the Scuttlebutt, and beyond that the superstructures of the ships tied up at the pier.

"Ohmygod!" the blonde at the wheel shouted.

Flashing red and blue lights turned the back seat into a paranoid disco. As I wrestled my jeans up over my knees I realized what had happened: we'd blown through the gates without stopping, triggering a full-scale security alert.

"Pull over!" I shouted. "Okay! You don't have to yell!"

She wheeled the car into an empty parking lot and killed the ignition. Base security personnel decked out in camouflage assault gear surrounded the vehicle. I put

my hands in the air to block the light beaming into the car from their high-powered flashlights. The doors flew open and Weeks and I were dragged out of the car. I'd never had anyone point a gun at me, and I was thankful for all the lights that made it hard to see the weapons aimed at my head. I was thrown to the ground and pinned there while they cuffed me. One minute I was with a slinky young woman who couldn't get out of her clothes fast enough, and the next thing I knew I was eating asphalt with a wannabe commando stepping on my neck. I had no idea what hap-

pened to the girls. It's hard to say goodbye when you're lying on the pavement with a shotgun in your face.

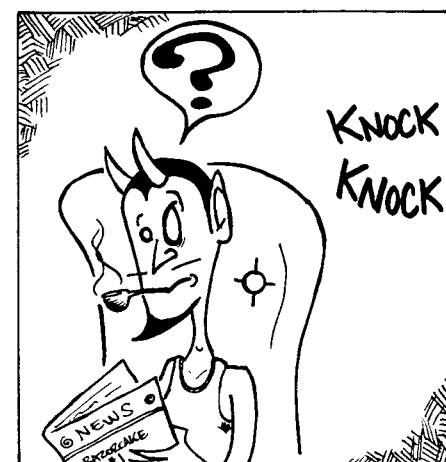
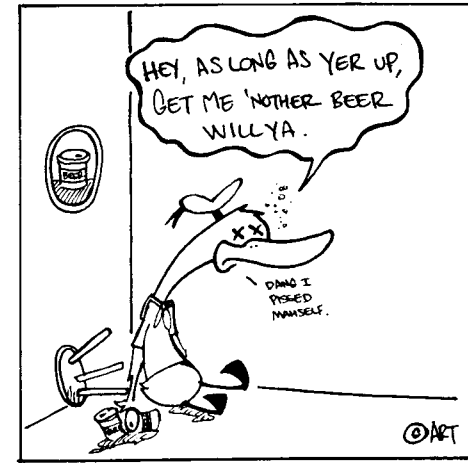
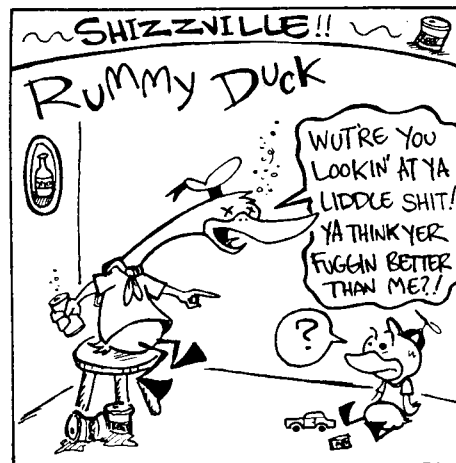
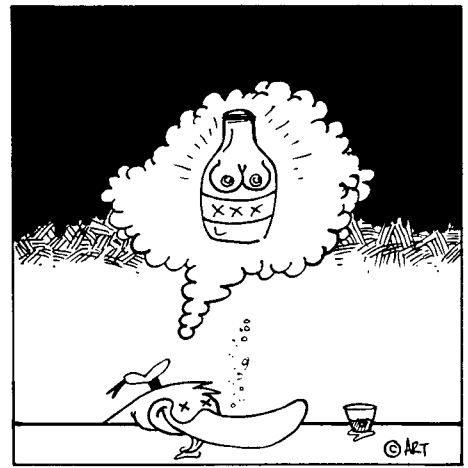
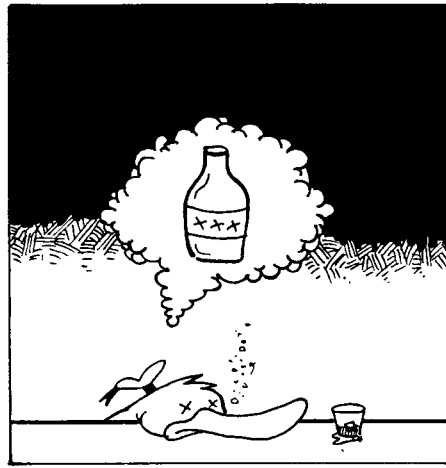
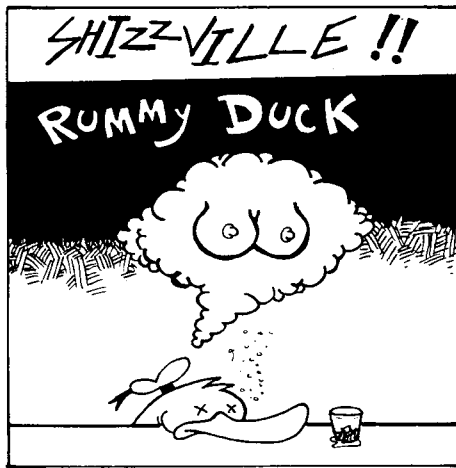
They took us to the brig, a place I would get to know pretty well, and interrogated us. It was pretty obvious what happened. The blondes were as dangerous-looking as a basket of kittens. The goons called shore patrol and sent us back to the *Meyerkord*, where we were brought to the quarterdeck in handcuffs for no good reason other than to humiliate us. It worked.

Our stunt got us 45 and 45: forty-five days restricted liberty, forty-five days extra duty. We had just enjoyed our last night in Tijuana, or anywhere else for that matter, before our ship went underway for six months. The curse had caught up with us, big time.

With Weeks and I on lockdown, Carter had no one to take to TJ with him, so he went to Tijuana by himself. One dark night, some Mexicans jumped him in an alley. They stabbed him in the eye with a broken beer bottle and took his wallet. He lived, but he lost the eye, and none of us ever saw Carter again.

—Money







"I think I just broke the world record for the most farts in Grandma's bedroom!"

The Dinghole Reports
By the Rhythm Chicken
(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

—Dr. Sicnarf walks into Funyuns' Milwaukee apartment with his Polish/English dictionary and a case of Pabst. Francis, already boozed up by the Christreater at the Cactus Club, greets the Doctor and hugs the case of Pabst. —

(Hey Doc! I see you brought twenty-four of my friends! –F.F.)

[Yes. I don't know why it never occurred to me before. The Rhythm Chicken is on the other flat side of the Earth (Poland). He can't SEE us with the ham radio. Why not enjoy some fine cold Pabsts during this issue's Dinghole Report. He'll never know. Say, have you been drinking already? –Dr. S.]

(Yeah, I just came from Happy Hour at the Cactus Club. Christreater wanted me good and schnocked for today's Chicken interaction. Shots of gin – that's the kind of legacy the Chicken leaves here for me to sustain in his absence. <hiccup> Man oh man, I just don't know how he does it. <hiccup> I mean how many shots of gin can one chicken liver take? So, who remembers the Super Chicken cartoon? –F.F.)

[Well, I can see that I have a little catching up to do before the Chicken starts calling! –Dr. S.]

—Sicnarf fishes out a can of Pabst. <Pshhhhhht! gulp, gulp, gulp, gulp....smack!> Just then the ham radio starts buzzing and coming to life. —

Hello? Sicnarf? Funyuns? Rhythm Chicken from Radio Free Krakow, spokesbird for Percussive Polish Poultry here. Milwaukee? Are you there?

(CHICKEN! RHYTHM CHICKEN! Hey there, buddy bird! –F.F.)

[Good Evening, Mr. Chicken! –Dr. S.]

To tell the truth, it's two A.M. here and I just came from the cellar pubs in the Old Town. These polish beers can really kick my ass! CLUCKINAY! So, anyway, are you guys ready for my first real highlighted quote in *Razorcake*?

(Let'er rip, there, Rhythm Rabbit! –F.F.)

[Er, he means Rhythm Chicken! Yeah, let's hear **RAZORCAKE** 8 it! –Dr. S.]

Well, this last Christmas my Hen and I were sitting in my parents' bedroom with my niece and two nephews telling ghost stories. Matt, who is also my godson, was displaying an impressive array of audio methane, farting through everyone's stories and causing many snickers and giggles from all of us. Finally, he laid it on us all, the greatest quote I have ever heard! Surely he was hatched by my sister, who was hatched by the same Momma Chicken as I! What a proud godfather was I to hear such words flow freely from my godson's mouth. He said, "I think I just broke the world record for the most farts in Grandma's bedroom!" Sheer brilliance! The world record! He broke it! In Grandma's bedroom!

(GRANNY FARTS! YAHOOOOO! PASS THE GIN! –F.F.)

[Uh....Wow! That really is a great line! <gulp, gulp,...> So, what was it we ended with last time? Oh yeah, that dinghole vs. egghole debate. Could you maybe tell us about this, Chicken? –Dr. S.]

No, no, no, Funyuns, he broke the world record for the most farts IN Grandma's bedroom! Tears of pride, my boys, tears of pride! Of course, my mom didn't find his quote to be as entertaining, and on CHRISTMAS DAY, no less!

(Bring on the Egghole Reports! –F.F.)

[Dinghole! Dinghole Reports! That's what he means! –Dr. S.]

Ah yes, the dinghole vs. egghole debate. This one was brought up months ago between the Hen and I. She was under the impression that females, lacking a dinger, would therefore also lack a dinghole. I, of course, had to set her straight and explain that the dinghole is a universal body part, present in both genders of every species! Females lacking a dinghole? HOOSHWASH! It's in there! She then responded by insisting that the egghole is the female version of the dinghole. Now, I KNOW I don't have an egghole. This is true. But then again, I'm a chicken and I eat with my pecker! HOOSHWASH! Everybody's got a dinghole! Everybody's got a dunghole, too, but it doesn't have the mystical significance of the dinghole. Females do have eggholes. I'll grant her that. But doesn't every living breathing creature have the ability to squeeze strange and spicy objects into its dinghole? She then went on to say that she does have a peehole, and I might've mistaken that for a "female dinghole." She went on fur-

ther to say that women also have the ability to squeeze strange objects into their eggholes and stretch them to unheard of extremes.

(Yeah! I bet you can fit your PECKER in her EGGHOLE, eh Chicken?!!! –F.F.)

[Sorry, Mr. Chicken. <gulp...> You're going to have to excuse Francis. He's not himself today. <gulp, gulp,.....BURRRRP!> Whoop! Excuse me! –Dr. S.]

Furthermore, she goes on to say that all living creatures pass into this world through the egg-hole. I can't deny that, but I refuse to sit and let the glory of the dinghole be tarnished! The only creature of this Earth without a dinghole is Gary Coleman, and Michael J. Fox has no Elvis in him, HUP! To deny one's dinghole is to embrace Colemanism, and that's sacrilege in my presence. How can hooshtwash be the foundation of the scientific religion of ruckus? Nope, we've all been created with dingholes and our purpose is to stretch them. Let no egghole, dunghole, pee-hole, poohole, manhole, or molehole be mistaken for our anatomical focal point, the great and mighty dinghole!

[(BUUUUUUUURP! –Dr. S. & F.F.)]

Maybe next time I'll go into it with my new Wisconsinism vs. Colemanism debate, touching upon the relevance of my Hen's mother living in Coleman, Wisconsin. Egads! Did you ever get the feeling that all the hooshtwash, ruckus, and rhubarb in life is somehow related in a bizarre master plan under direct mathematical jurisdiction of the Wren Eagle?

(Beam me up, Scotty! The egghole's got the dinghole on the ropes! –F.F.)

[Er...Hey, Chicken! What's all this I've been hearing about the Rally Rabbit? <gulp, gulp, gulp...> You haven't been flying back to Milwaukee on covert missions for the Miller Brewing Company, have you? – Dr.S.]

Okay, I knew it was going to have to come up sooner or later. Silly me, I thought that I could move to Poland and let the whole Rally Rabbit story lay to rest for a while. Not a chance. My previous dabblings with corporate celebrity greatness have come back to haunt me. Not only do the Milwaukee Brewers steal my image as the new team mascot (or ASScot, as my Hen would say), but during my tenure in Poland they've gone and created a REAL JOB of the position and given it to someone else! Lucky for me, I've had my Chickenhead smuggled to me

here in Poland (THANK YOU, KRISTIN!). If the Brewers wanted to keep the Rally Rabbit as their puppet to stir up the crowd at their ballgames, they would have to attempt to recreate the head. Believe me, there is no way to recreate an old ratty, rotten, stinky, skanky, moldy Chickenhead that's been repeatedly soaked in sweat, spit, beer, cum, blood, and urine for the last four years! Well, as you can see by the accompanying photo (also smuggled to me by my lackeys from the inside) they have tried and FAILED MISERABLY! What's with the sunglasses? They can be expecting a lawsuit from the Energizer people shortly, and I'm sure they can milk a lot more out of a professional baseball team than they can out of a Rhythm Chicken! Look at how CLEAN it is! How can anyone take it seriously? And that lame-ass Wal-Mart smile! If I know Milwaukee, they'll violently reject this pale imitation! They'll pelt him with bratwurst and skin him alive! Now for your mediocre middle-of-the-road entertainment, the 100% ruckus-free Rally Rabbit! I hereby sever all previous ties with this embarrassment and condemn all things Rally Rabbit. Damn! Their new head looks so repulsive, it looks more like a RABBIT than a chicken! I vow to fight this false chicken to the grave! (Unless Miller agrees to match my other offers from PepsiCo and Phillip Morris!)

(COME ON, CHICKEN! WE KNOW IT'S YOU! FESS UP, RUCKUS RABBIT! -F.F.)

I'm on the other side of the planet! I'm deep in the heart of Poland! Besides, how could I possibly stoop so low as to accept their new Rally Rabbit image? The new Rally Rabbit is a crime against punk rock, and someone else is making money that should be mine!

{Okay, okay, this has gone on far enough! It's time for my first Egghole Report! - the Hen}

(Bring it on, Hen! Yahooo! Egghole city! -F.F.)

Hey! This is MY column! I'm the Rhythm Chicken! Me, me, me! These are the Dinghole Reports! No more egghole hooshwash! No more Rally Rabbit hooshwash!

—Just then, Francis Funyuns spills a Pabst on the ham radio. It starts sparking and smoking and the fuse in the apartment is blown. The doctor and Francis retire to the couch and each open a new can of Pabst. —

Well, I guess that leaves just me to finish things up here. At least I can finish my column in peace. So, after rereading many of my old reports I noticed a certain pattern somewhat evident in most of them. Because of the recent lack of "new" ruckus, I thought I could get away with offering you a template to help build your own Dinghole Report. I know some may see this as a sort of "cop-out," but Funyuns and Sicanarf aren't here to stop me so here I go! Just fill in the _____ with the proper person, place, or thing!

Generic Dinghole Report #__: Ruckus Rock in _____! (Rhythm Chicken sighting #__)

It was a perfectly sunny day in _____, and the Pabst had been flowing heavily for hours. The _____ people at the _____ could feel the tension building. They needed something to free them from the everyday McLife they'd been trapped in. Only ruckus could be the hot steak knife to slice through the monotonous butter of this hungry situation. The gears of ruckus were being lubed by countless pitchers of Pabst on tap. The chickenkit was set up and there was no turning back. The crowd watched and begged for the upcoming onslaught of hellsent ruckus in the form of red-hot rhythm rock. Time had come. I pulled on the Chickenhead and the place went nuts. The opening

drum roll was met with riotous cheers and then it happened. I rocked the rhythm rock and chaos erupted into a whirlwind of drunken drumbeats, wayward mayhem, and airborne Pabst. _____ had never seen such a crazy wild sight as this. All the hooshwash was left at the roadside. The slick-slacks had all been weeded out and the _____ had all been liberated in the shitstorm of _____. Just when it all was about to invert into another black hole and collapse in upon itself, I raised my wings. The rhythms halted. Just then the crowd offered their sacrifice. Gary Coleman was body-passed up to my Chicken altar. He kicked and screamed, and in one last attempt, he scrunched his face and said, "Whatcha talkin' about, Rhythm Chicken?" The divine ruckus ate him alive, devoured him whole, and consumed his evil essence. _____ became a ticking time bomb and the wrestling ensued. The Chickenkit was given an Irish-whip into the turnbuckle. Punk cluckin' rock! The Rhythm Chicken suplexed _____ just before _____ got the

Chicken in a figure-4 beaklock. The mushroom cloud rose over the horizon and the ground zero of ruckus shone a blinding light over all existence. Double-plus good, eh?

Well, I can safely promise everyone a REAL BRAND NEW Dinghole Report nest time. This coming week I will make my triumphant return to Frohburg, Germany for their greatest holiday, Mannertag (Men's Day!). The Rhythm Chicken has been formally requested to supply his ruckus for the hordes of drinking men in Saxony! Expect big things, readers. Expect greatness.

Until nest time, I think I just broke the world record for the most farts in Grandma's bedroom!

-The Rhythm Chicken
Rhythmchicken@hotmail.com
www.rhythmchicken.com



EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA!

Rhythm Chicken Herald

ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE.

FRANCIS FUNYUNS NUDE PHOTOS

Get him drunk and he drops trou! pg. 3

IMPOSTER!

MILWAUKEE BREWERS HIRE FAKE CHICKEN

"THEY'RE LAME" EXPERTS SAY

Rhythm Chicken



Maddy

Shiftless When Idle



When it was published, people in the Eastern bloc claimed it wasn't harsh enough, while people in the West were busy shitting their pants and calling out for their mommies!

Alright kids, listen up! You've had it too easy for too long. Lying back by the pool, drinking a Pabst and leisurely reading about the latest really stupid thing I've done. It's time to demand some discipline in the ranks! It's time for YOU to do a little work! Since it's summer – the time of swimming, kickball, and making out in trees – I thought

he calls "the Unfinished Civil War." This book has more bizarre characters than my own family, including Civil War reenactors (one guy whose specialty is to "bloat out" like a dead soldier), a guy who only speaks in Doors lyrics, and racists aplenty! This is one of the best books I have ever read! How could you not like a book that informs

this. By the time you're done, you'll be clutching a gun to your head, mumbling obscenities, and wondering if ANYONE in Russia is still alive.

Book #3

Redneck Manifesto by Jim Goad

Okay, so the guy's crazy. Since when did that disqualify any

the books on serpent handling are horrible – basically just an extended chance for a writer to look down on Appalachian culture. But this one looks as though it could actually be good! In case you are unaware of the coolest religion I've yet come across, snake handling is part of Appalachian Baptist culture. It's laid back, a little nuts, and in many

Maddy



Dude, Maddy is a sellout!

MY SUMMER READING LIST!

Name _____
Grade _____

My List of Books

- ☐ Confederates in the Attic
- ☐ Night of Stone
- ☐ Redneck Manifesto
- ☐ The Serpent Handlers
- ☐ Working
- ☐ Rivethead
- ☐ Homage to Catalonia
- ☐ The Painted Bird
- ☐ Oman Ra/Yellow Arrow
- ☐ Native Son

Please attach a 100-word essay about your most favorite + least fav. book.

Send completed form to:
296A Nassau Ave #3L
Brooklyn, NY 11222

Have an education-filled summer!



Yeah, I'm with you man. Books are so corporate!

I would ruin all your fun and present you with Your Summer Reading List!

Below, you will find ten books to read this summer. Please check out the books from your local library, read them, and complete the form. Whoever completes the assignment will win a prize. Please, no help from your older brothers or sisters!

Maddy's Official Punk Rock Summer Reading List!

Book #1:

Confederates in the Attic by Tony Horwitz

The author takes a trip to all the hot spots of the Confederacy in an effort to explore what

you of the exact burial location of Stonewall Jackson's arm? To find out why it's detached from his body, and why so many people starve themselves to get down to "standard Confederacy weight" each year before the annual Gettysburg reenactment, read this book!

Book #2

Night of Stone: Death and Memory in Twentieth-Century Russia by Catherine Merridale

Okay, time for some light reading about bloodshed! Punk rock! If ever you were in doubt about how fucked Russia has been for, oh, the last several thousand years, read this book! Note: Have plenty of alcohol on hand to get you through

author? If you haven't read this yet and you're a poor white hick (like me!), you must get yourself post-haste to the library, my friend! Jim Goad's writing style is often annoying (read: really, really fucking annoying after about 150 pages), but this is one of the best arguments about class in America that I've heard in a long time. Caution: this book could completely change your stance on class and race, or just really piss you off! Punk!

Book #4:

The Serpent Handlers: Three Families and Their Faith by Fred Brown and Jeanne McDonald

Okay, okay, okay, I must confess that I haven't read this book yet. But it looks so good! A lot of

cases, there are very few rules! I once watched an old '50s film of a snake handling service, and it was like a punk house party! Guys yelling, people dancing, tons of people picking up instruments and playing 'em in a crazy, noisy, chaotic way, and, you know, snakes! Who needs regular boring Christianity when you've got this?

Book #5

Working by Studs Terkel

I don't know whether I want to marry Studs Terkel or BE Studs Terkel, but one thing is certain: this man has written some of the best history books ever. Most of his books are oral histories; he interviews dozens or hundreds of people and transcribes it, puts it together,

and there you go! *Working* is my favorite Studs book. Dozens of people talking about work. Crazy jobs, boring jobs, stupid jobs, and great jobs! Work is still the great unexplored area of American life! We need more stories about work, not less! Attention reading list students: This will be a quick, fun read, I promise!

Book #6

Rivethed by Ben Hamper

Okay, continuing on with the work theme. I think I've mentioned *Rivethed* in practically every other *Razorcake* column, but just in case there are one or two punks in a small hamlet in Slovakia who still haven't read this book... this time it's REQUIRED READING! Ben Hamper is such a great writer and I liked this book enough to interview him for *Razorcake* a few issues back. Tales of working as a riveter at GM with lots of ridiculousness, drinking, and punk rock thrown in for good measure. I think Ben Hamper should get another equally stupid job so there can be a sequel. Maybe *Crematorhead?* *HogKillerHead?* *WalMartHead?*

Book #7

Homage to Catalonia
by George Orwell

I'm assuming that everyone's

already read *1984* and *Animal Farm* and has made the appropriate 2.5 references per day in order to maintain their Official Punk Status (OPS), but you've been wasting your time! *Homage to Catalonia* is so much more ridiculous! It's Orwell's story of the time he spent fighting against Franco in the Spanish Civil War. Note: if you're looking for a good, comprehensive book about that war, this is NOT it! Note #2: if you're looking for a book about a totally British gent who complains that all he does is sit around in the Spanish countryside where the tea is simply dreadful, this is the book for you!

Book #8

The Painted Bird
by Jerzy Kosinski

To put in plainly, dear students, this book is fucked up! Quite possibly the most disturbing book I have read! A tale of a boy roaming around Eastern Europe during World War II, encountering every last type of sadistic peasants. Violent, insane, and truly disgusting! Kosinski has flip-flopped over the years about whether this book is based on facts or not. When it was published, people in the Eastern bloc claimed it wasn't harsh enough, while people in the West were busy shitting their pants

and calling out for their mommies! The GG Allin of the literary scene!

Book #9

Oman Ra and *The Yellow Arrow*
by Victor Pelevin

I know, I know, I tricked you by putting two books on the same bill! But fear not! Both are short stories, about fifty pages long, and so damn good! Contemporary Russian absurdism at its best! Tales of murderous space programs, train trips that never end, and the delusions of the Soviet Empire! Short, funny, and, like every other book about Eastern Europe, disturbing!

Book #10

Native Son by Richard Wright

Okay, if you haven't killed yourself or gone insane yet, here's one more book to try to put you over the edge. If you ever wanted to know how to dismember a body and burn it in a small furnace, this is the book for you! A great novel about race in America from one of the best writers in the past century. Reads like a trashy murder mystery, ends up being a commentary on the black experience. Hey, I should write those back-of-the-book blurbs!

So, this should be enough to keep you out of trouble for the

summer! Don't forget to complete the card and send it in!

—Maddy

P.S. By the time you read this, I'll be in France – eating cheese, dancing along to the No Talents, and eating Freedom fries. I won't be able to answer any mail until I get back in September. If you need to reach me, email me at cereal-core@hotmail.com. If you need copies of *Tight Pants*, check out www.microcosmpublishing.com. Au revoir!





Sean Carswell

A Monkey to Ride the Dog



I wanted to hear a Hunter Thompson-type bender story. Hell, I would've settled for a basic fucked-a-pro-wrestler's-wife story.

I don't know if this happens to other people, or if this is just an inevitable result of me having spent the better part of a decade drunk, but I got my first letter from rehab this week. It was from an old college buddy of mine, Pete. We'd met in a creative writing class at Florida State and we drank a lot together in those days. We had a whole crew of us who thought we were like Kerouac and the gang, always drinking and going home and writing about it. After college, Pete and I went our separate ways, but we kept in touch. We'd always try to outdo each other in letters talking about our drunk stories. A few years later, we both ended up in Atlanta, both tending bar, and the drinking continued.

Anyway, now I'm in LA and Pete's in rehab and I guess he's at the point where he has to apologize to everyone he's harmed, because he wrote me a long letter apologizing for all the fucked up shit he did to me. Most of it was just stuff I don't even remember, like apparently he took a shit in the upper tank of my toilet once, and, according to him, he spent about an hour trying to convince one of my girlfriends at the time to give him a rim job. I don't even know what girl he's talking about. Then, his letter launched into this long story about him and our mutual friend, PJ, getting fucked up one night. I'd always wondered what happened that night, and Pete never came clean until just now.

I think it's a funny story, and since I haven't written anything new lately except for essays about war and the story that's in the anthology called *Punch and Pie*, I thought I'd just use part of Pete's letter as my column for this issue. So here it is.

Pete's Story

PJ showed up at my bar, Champs, to tell me he was quitting drinking. Quitting drugs. Quitting everything. It was 11:30 on a Friday night. My first thought was, if you're really going sober, why the fuck are you showing up at my bar, where you know you're gonna get free drinks, at 11:30 on a Friday night?

It'd been a crazy night up to that point. The bar was packed. The Braves were playing in the World Series. It must've been against the Yankees because some redneck kept screaming, "Yankee go home!" The bar had been three deep, fucking packed, all night. Then the Braves lost and within ten minutes, everyone cleared out and there was enough room for a tumbleweed to come rumbling down the barroom floor. This is when I finally caught my breath and looked down the bar and saw PJ. His midget ass was propped up on one of those big, wooden stools and his head poked up over

the edge of the bar like some kind of living "Kilroy was here" painting. I was so happy to see the little fucker that I grabbed a bottle of whiskey out of the well and walked over with two shot glasses. After a night like I'd had, I needed a friend like PJ.

That's when he told me, "Pete, I'm quitting everything. No booze. No drugs."

This shocked me, but I didn't let it show. I just poured out the two shots and slid one in front of him.

"I'm serious," he said. "Shit's been getting too crazy when I drink. I gotta stop. I'm checking into rehab tomorrow."

And I'm thinking to myself, how the hell does a crazy fucker like PJ know when shit's gotten too crazy? Where does a guy like this draw a line? It's like, if a retarded kid falls on his head, how do you know if he suffered any brain damage? Right? Does he get dumber? Can he? And the same thing with PJ. How can he tell if the demons in his head come from the alcohol and drugs or if they're just your garden variety PJ demons?

I'm sure I've probably told you about this, but do you remember how I first met PJ?

I was at a party back in the FSU days and I stumbled out of the joint, drunk off my ass, and what should I see but this little midget trying to tip over a Volkswagen Beetle. He looked so determined, just like that little ant and the rubber tree, you know? He was squatting down next to the Beetle, his shoulder and hands just below the doorknob, just pushing with all his might. He looked so damn cute and helpless that I figured I'd give him a hand. Of course you know I didn't want to tip that car over. I just wanted to give the little guy some hope. So I saddled up right next to him and put my shoulder to the car. Between the two of us, we actually managed to get it up a bit. It surprised me. I didn't think we'd be able to budge it, but those cars are so top-heavy that you can a couple of wheels off the ground. And that little PJ was a strong fucker. I'd look over at him, his face beet red, veins bulging out of his forehead, tendons in his neck stretched out. He bared his teeth like some kind of wild raccoon and pushed and pushed like a motherfucker. For a second, I thought that we might actually be able to tip over that car. As soon as I thought this, I pulled back. PJ didn't seem to notice. He just pushed on that car with all his might. After about ten seconds of this, all of his strength was spent and the car dropped back down. PJ got so mad that he started shaking and kicking the car. It wobbled like a jello mold, but it wasn't gonna go over. Then, next thing I knew, PJ was on top of the car, climbing

in through the sun roof. At this point, some people came out of the party, so I took a couple of steps back. I figured that, if it was their car, I was unaffiliated. The midget was on his own.

The people from the party walked past the Beetle and got into another car and left. When I turned to look back, PJ was popping back out the sun roof – even though he was more than welcome to just open a door; it's not like he was locked in the car. Anyway, he was climbing out of the sun roof with a baseball bat and some cassette tapes. "This fucker is a Journey fan," PJ said. "He's gonna fucking pay."

I talked PJ into walking around the corner before pitching the cassettes to him. It took quite a few pitches. He was more of a Mickey Mouse than a Mickey Mantle. I kept pitching the tapes to him and he kept striking out. I threw them underhanded, really slow, but still he couldn't hit them. Finally, I had to take the bat and whack those cassettes into the outfield myself.

So I know this wasn't the craziest thing I ever did with PJ. Not even close. You already know about the time that we almost burned down his apartment complex. You know about him running around the campus nude with six cops chasing him. You know the story of his cat. We don't need to go into any of this. But the Volkswagen incident was how I met the guy and it's the first thing I thought of when he came into my bar and told me that he was quitting everything. And it's not that I didn't respect his choice to sober up. It was probably the right choice. It's just that I'd had a rough night and needed a friend to drink with and here was PJ and it was too perfect to pass up. So I acted really hurt that he turned down the shot. I told him that he was ripping the head off of our friendship and pissing down the neck. I told him that deep down inside, he wanted to drink with me or else he wouldn't be in my bar at 11:30 on a Friday night. I appealed to the cheapskate within him and offered to give him his drinks for free. I tried everything: guilt, intimidation, flattery, the works. He flat out refused to drink with me. Then, Cindy came in.

I'm pretty sure you never met Cindy. She was an Italian girl who worked at Champs for a little bit. A real nut job, but hot. Hot, hot, hot. Her shift was up and she took off her gay Champs golf shirt. As soon as she lost the uniform, it was easy to see how hot she was with that threadbare white t-shirt and the purple lace bra that you could see right through the shirt. She bellied up to the bar, two seats down from PJ, and hit me up for a shift drink. Ordinarily, I never gave Cindy free drinks because she kinda bugged me and she was way too nutty for me to

want to fuck her. But on this night, I saw an angle and played it. I introduced Cindy and PJ and told Cindy that PJ and I were old friends from back in the college days and here he was, refusing to drink with us. "He claims he's going to rehab tomorrow," I said.

"If you're going to rehab tomorrow, that's all the more reason to drink with us tonight," Cindy said. "It's your last chance."

Believe me, I had tried this logic on PJ already and it didn't work then. But Cindy had on that sexy purple bra and that changed everything. PJ tipped the shot and his fate was sealed.

I had to finish up my shift, but I made sure that PJ and Cindy had full drinks and that they didn't go anywhere without me. The bar was fairly dead, so I got to do a little keep-up-with-the-Jonesers drinking. One of my regulars came in to repay me for the night before, when he'd gotten drunk and walked out on his tab. I'd covered him because I knew he was good for it. And he was. He paid up his old tab, tacked on a fat ass tip, and gave me a little packet of powder as an interest payment. At first I thought it was cocaine, but when I got the packet under the kitchen lights, I saw that it was kinda yellow, which meant that it was probably speed. Even then, I was no fan of crank, but I figured that PJ might be interested, so I hung on to it.

Pretty soon, the bar was empty of everyone but PJ, Cindy, and the resident coke dealer. I let PJ and Cindy keep drinking for free, but Aaron the coke dealer had to pay. I made him pay even after I closed everything and shut down the register and handed my cash drawer in to the manager. Not that I didn't like Aaron. It's just that he brought with him a certain coked out, yuppie clientele. Dealing with those gacked out fuckers was my least favorite part of the job. I just didn't want to encourage it. All those wired bastards staring at me with their big, intense eyes darting all around like some kind of fucking ferret; breathing all loud and rapid through those flaring red nostrils; talking to me nonstop while I tried to work, just going on and on and on, gack, gack, gack, gack, gack. They drove me fucking crazy. So even though Aaron was a good guy and I liked him, he had to pay for every goddamn drink. And I made sure he knew why.

It was too late to hit another bar this far north of the city, so I talked the manager into letting me steal a case from the cooler and returning a fresh one the next day. We'd done this deal a few times before, so she was cool with it. I always replaced the shit I stole from Champs. You know this.

I wanted to head back into the city. I don't even like going out to the burbs to work; I damn sure don't want to hang out there after hours. But PJ wanted to stick with Cindy and I didn't have anyone else to drink with and I felt kinda responsible for PJ on his supposed last night before rehab, so the three of us followed Aaron and his little Mercedes up to his house in Kennesaw. On the way up, I told PJ that the city of Kennesaw has a law that every person must

own a gun. "It's fucking true, you know," I told him. "As soon as you get outside the bypass of Atlanta, you're stuck in the middle of north Georgia rednecks. You'll be lucky if someone doesn't shoot you just for being a midget."

"What's wrong with everyone having a gun?" Cindy asked, because she was nutty and because she lived out here, outside the perimeter.

"You like guns?" PJ asked her.

"Sure, I like guns," she said.

"I got a pistol for you," PJ said. When Cindy didn't react, PJ added, "You just have to rub the barrel a little to make it shoot. But don't worry, it won't hurt."

Aaron took it pretty well. I think he thought PJ was flirting with him. I think Aaron was flattered. He knew he was stuck in the eighties. He had to know. He still wore Izod shirts, for god's sake. I don't even think they still make those fucking things. I think Aaron just stockpiled when Izod went out of business. So Aaron didn't care that PJ was making fun of him. Or if Aaron did care, he didn't show it. He didn't do anything but smile when PJ asked him if he still wore leather docksiders and white slacks and turquoise blazers with t-shirts; or if he knew that he'd forgotten to turn his collar up; or if he was planning on feathering his hair again, if the Rogaine ever kicked in; and on and on. I listened and laughed a little and remembered that I wasn't supposed to give PJ speed. Cindy listened, too, but she didn't get any of the jokes. She was a young one. The eighties were her elementary school years. What can I say?

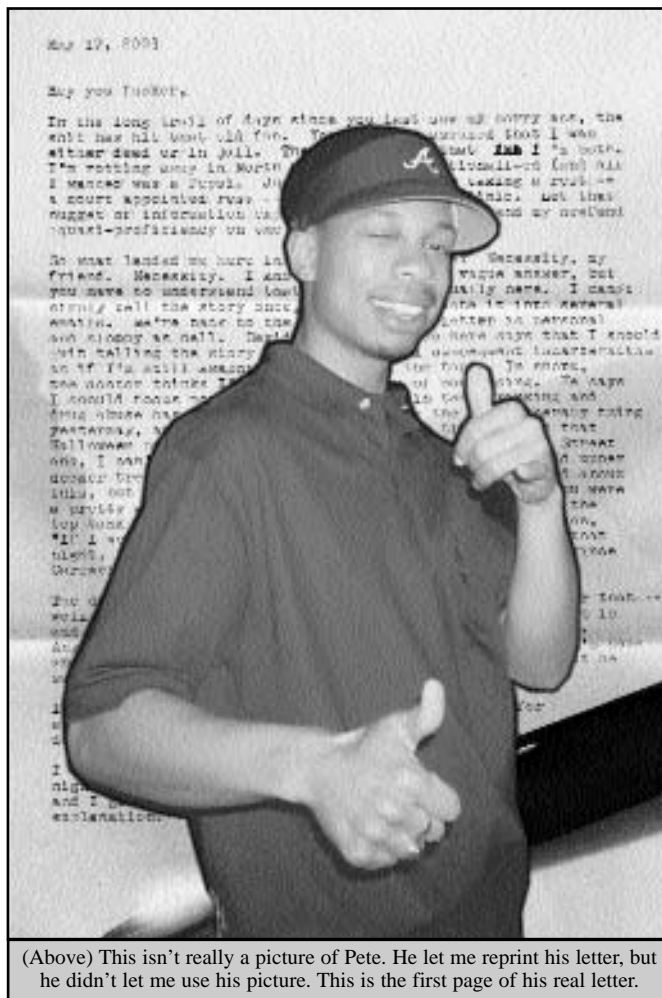
After the speed, Aaron broke out the coke and he and Cindy and PJ all dug in. I stayed away because, as far as I can tell, all coke does for me is make me want more coke. I stuck with speed and Budweiser and occasional bong hits and the night started to spin into a blur. We played Aaron's new wave records. Aaron tried to make margaritas even though he had no sour mix, no lime juice, no triple sec, nothing but tequila and ice, so we ended up drinking these burning gold slushies. For some reason, I kept saying, "I can't believe my favorite midget is going to rehab. PJ, you're my favorite midget." Cindy kept sticking up for PJ, trying to claim that he wasn't a midget, that he wasn't even that short. I'd heard that argument before and wasn't convinced. It even got so bad that Cindy and I dug around Aaron's garage until we found a tape measure and measured PJ.

"Look," Cindy said. "He's 5'4". That's way too tall to be a midget."

"There's so much that you don't understand," I told her. It's this new generation of kids, man. All the ritalin really gets to them.

Aaron kept hitting on PJ. PJ was either clueless or liked the attention or was just flirting for coke or who knows? How well do I know my favorite midget, anyway? Cindy, feeling vindicated, started to hit on me. I spent a lot of time trying to decide just how nutty is too nutty and if a girl can be hot enough to make you not care. I scooted in closer on her when I realized that she lived far enough away to make for an easy way out of it if I hooked up with her. I scooted back a little further when I remembered that she and I worked together. When I took one too many bumps of speed and drank one too many gold slushies and called PJ a midget one too many times and got punched in the face by PJ, my purple bra'd princess came through with some nice Vicaden to take the edge off. We all shared some of that.

Aaron outlined his seven point plan as to why PJ shouldn't enter rehab. PJ gathered us around in a storytelling circle and outlined the twelve steps he'd taken to fucking up his life: his divorce, his business going out



(Above) This isn't really a picture of Pete. He let me reprint his letter, but he didn't let me use his picture. This is the first page of his real letter.

And that nutty chick just smiled. My ass would've gotten smacked if I'd said that.

When we got inside Aaron's house, I went back to the bathroom to take a leak. I remembered the speed in my pocket and figured I'd lay a line down on the toilet tank for PJ. I wanted to make sure the stuff was okay before I gave it to PJ, and besides, I accidentally spilled a second line's worth of speed on the tank, so I took a line myself. Then, I left the bathroom, caught up with PJ, and told him about the line. He shot off to the toilet tank.

He came back out, spun: fidgety, jumpy, and raring to go. Totally beyond rehab, and making fun of Aaron's house to Aaron. "I saw this house on an episode of *Miami Vice*," PJ said. "I know it. I recognize those big stones around the fireplace. I remember Don Johnson's huaraches walking across this shag carpet. You were on *Miami Vice*, weren't you?"

of business, his health and money pissed down the drain, and so on. All fucking boring stuff. I'd really hoped that, when he said shit had gotten too fucked up, he meant that he'd gotten so drunk that he ended up pulling the fire alarm at the New York Stock Exchange, or pimping hookers to oil company executives, or something. I wanted to hear a Hunter Thompson-type bender story. Hell, I would've settled for a basic fucked-a-pro-wrestler's-wife story. But this generic downfall for a guy like PJ was just too depressing. I made a round of beer and tequila slushies for everyone, just to punctuate our sorry state of affairs. It was some time around then when Aaron broke out his gun collection.

"We'd all feel better if we shot something," he said.

At this point, my memory started to fade. I remember only bits and pieces. I remember all four of us piling into the cab of my Ford truck, with a couple of shotguns and four or five handguns in the toolbox, heading out to the mountains of Kennesaw. I remember an empty mountain field and Aaron being really cautious and preaching about gun safety. I remember PJ started telling so many Italian jokes to Cindy that I thought she was gonna shoot him. It was the one about the Italian men growing mustaches to look like their mothers that really sent Cindy over the edge. We had to disarm her and feed her some new Vicaden. I remember taking a shotgun and shooting at nothing more specific than the side of a mountain. I hit it. I remember drinking the second to last beer and hiding the last one so that I'd have something for the long ride home. I remember that, when PJ

grabbed two revolvers and started dancing around like Yosemite Sam, shooting in the air and screaming about hunting varmit, Aaron finally had enough and disarmed all of us. I remember leaving the mountains just as the first light of sunrise crept up over the dawn.

I remember leaving PJ, Cindy, and Aaron to

It's like, if a retarded kid falls on his head, how do you know if he suffered any brain damage?

their coke and their tequila slushies and their sexual appetites and their dreams of rehab and their re-creation of the eighties. I drove back into the city and drank the last beer and took one last bump so that I wouldn't fall asleep on the 404 and made it home right around the time when morning rush hour traffic was starting to crowd the freeways.

I don't know what happened to PJ over the next couple of days. Cindy missed her day shift that next morning and got fired. When I found out about it, all I could think was, damn, I could've fucked her and never had to see her again. It took me a couple of minutes to console myself over that one. Finally, I told myself that the chick was nutty enough as it was and the last thing she needed was a worthless bastard like myself adding to her problems. Aaron was there for my next shift, like clockwork, filling my bar up with gackers. He had no say on what happened to PJ. But for the next couple of days,

PJ's car sat in the parking lot in front of Champs. Whenever I stood at the taps and poured an Anchor Steam, I could look straight ahead out the front window and see PJ's car sitting there and I'd take about three seconds to wonder what was going on, then the glass would be full and I'd serve the beer.

Of course, you know what happened eventually. I saw you when you finally dropped PJ off at his car. I was working the day shift that morning, covering for the other bartender, when you pulled up next to PJ's car and dropped off my favorite midget so that he could finally finish his trip to rehab.

So, deep down inside, I don't know if I think PJ really wanted one last bender, a bang to go out with, a final drunk before a lifetime of sobriety and if I'm glad I gave it to him. I don't know if I'm bragging here, or if I'm apologizing to you because the shit storm that I set in motion that night ended up on your doorstep, or if I'm just trying to assuage my guilt. Now that I'm in rehab myself, I understand how fucked up shit can get. I can't say I understand more about life. I think I understand less. Everything's just more complex. It was cool of you, though, to take PJ in when he showed up at your place, to help him sober up so that he could actually check into the clinic. In hindsight, I probably should've just served that little fucker a soda and let him go on his way. But that's the tough thing about making all your friends through a haze of booze and drugs. Everyone has to walk away alone before we all kill each other with our consumption.

—Sean Carswell

Sean Carswell





This wasn't a concert. It was a mass brain scrubbing for 50,000 people.

Big Brother Is Rocking

Sooner or later, everyone's gotta face his or her own personal hell. It's one of life's rites of passage, like zits or getting busted for the first time. Sometimes it falls upon you through no fault of your own; sometimes you bring it upon yourself in a sudden, brilliant flash of utter stupidity.

I faced my personal hell this past May 17, a brutal, bitter day of horror that involved having life dangle one of my longest held dreams before me like a metaphorical carrot, daring me to take hold of it, and then subjecting me to previously unimaginable levels of sheer agony for my efforts.

Since part of my wife's work involves public outreach, she was given free tickets to attend this year's Wango Tango super concert at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, partly to look into the availability of informational booths at the concert and the possibility of securing one at future concerts, and partly to interact with some of the kids she works with outside of the confines of work.

The concert is sponsored by KIIS-FM, possibly one of the most dismal top-40 stations on the planet. How bad, you ask? One of their most famous DJs, Rick Dees, was responsible for the song "Disco Duck" in the '70s, which I think says volumes. Not wanting to go alone, she asked me if I would mind accompanying her. Although my first instinct was to decline, I made the fatal error of asking who was lined up to perform.

"Well," she said, "other than Christina Aguilera, I don't really know." She paused a moment and added, "I think Santana and Kiss are supposed to play, too."

Now, I was a total Kiss fan as a kid, like a good many other pre-teens growing up in the '70s. I remember sitting in my cousin's room back when I was in the third grade, listening to all their albums in order of release, from the self-titled first album right through *Alive II*, listening to him recount tales of seeing their kabuki-cum-

person. I would daydream in class about seeing space-Ace Frehley soloing on his fireworks-spewing guitar as he floated in air, and of demon bassist Gene Simmons lighting up the night sky with balls of flame shooting from his mouth and leaving the stage awash in blood. In my pre-punk days, Kiss was *it*, THEE band that all other bands were compared to and summarily dismissed as just plain not cool enough to listen to.

Sadly, between the age when fandom first took hold and when I was actually of age to see them live, doing so was no longer on my to-do list, as they had in the interim kicked out two of their members, stopped wearing their famous makeup, veered for a time into the sordid world of disco stardom with "I Was Made for Lovin' You," and summarily began to suck.

A few years ago, the two original members left in the group got together with the other two original members they had kicked out and, in one of the most blatantly one-sided financial deals I've heard of to date, talked them into donning the makeup once again and taking the old show back on the road. I have avoided seeing them in their new/old incarnation for a number of reasons, the most valid being that I could never quite talk myself into paying the prices good seats at their concerts fetch. My wife inadvertently lucked upon the opportunity of my lifetime — to see the band that changed my life in all their grease-painted glory and, best of all, **WE DIDN'T HAVE TO PAY A PENNY FOR TICKETS**. I found myself telling her, "Yes, yes, for the love of God, woman, I'LL GO," with neither her nor I really thinking through the repercussions of such a decision. Two days later, we found ourselves driving up Colorado Boulevard, leaving late on purpose in an attempt to miss a good chunk of the opening acts, laughing at the lineup we had been able to find out about, talking about how cool it was gonna be finally seeing one of rock's greatest bands live, and placating our minds by saying over and over, "How bad

could it possibly be?"

We arrived to a very confused parking setup that ultimately involved paying fifteen dollars for the privilege of parking on the golf course adjacent to the Rose Bowl. Refusing to pay for ANYTHING involving the show, we instead parked by a nearby hiking trail, which turned out to be a thirty-minute walk back to the concert. As we walked back through the golf course, we heard in the distance the sound of Tyrese, one of mainstream music's newest sensations, wowing the crowd with his modern blend of hip-hop and r & b. By the time we got to our seats, he was off the stage (his set was cut short, according to one of my wife's co-workers who saw his set, because he was grabbing some girl's ass).

To date, Wango Tango has the distinction of being the largest show that I've been to: 50,000 people packing this famous football stadium, screamin', singin' and generally carryin' on as some of the hottest stars in pop music today grace a huge stage in fifteen to forty-five minute intervals, with huge television screens on either side beaming their picture-perfect faces so those of us in the shitty seats could see the action, too. The theme of this year's show was "The Ultimate Reality Show," and, to that end, some participants from recent TV "reality" shows were in attendance, both occasionally gracing the stage and signing autographs in the nearby Wango Tango Village. None of this nonsense meant a damn thing to me, though. All that mattered was that Kiss was playing, that I was **FINALLY** gonna see 'em, and all I had to do was make it through the next few hours.

Following Tyrese's sudden departure was the day's official "punk" entry, a complete bastardization of the term, going by the name Bowling for Soup. They took the stage looking like some errant boy-band deprived of any chance of being the next Backstreet Boys because they refused to pander to the requisite image by ditching their overweight guitarist, and

sounded like some unholy, fourth-rate Queens rip off band. Their songs were rife with subject matter ripped from today's headlines, like digging a girl who works at Hot Topic, girls digging "bad" boys, and the like. I looked around, and the crowd was literally eating this wretched joke of a band up, clinging and singing along to every word uttered by the lead singer and screaming out shit like, "I love you (pick your favorite member's name)!!!"

I watched in horror as they profaned the air with sound and realized at some point that nearly everything coming from the stage was prerecorded, meaning that if the singer wasn't lip-synching, the rest of the band was surely faking it. After they punished the crowd with fifteen minutes of blasphemy, they left the stage. I looked over at my wife, saw a slight trickle of blood apparently coming from her woefully abused eardrum and realized that we just might have made a serious mistake in attending this debacle.

Between Bowling for Soup and the next obscenity slated to assault the audience, the giant television screens began inundating the captive audience with commercials extolling the virtues of Pepsi, Toyota, KIIS-FM, Jack In the Box, and, for some strange reason, Albertson's supermarkets. I sat there with eyes glazed over, running a mental inventory of the thousands of gigs I've attended over the past twenty-plus years and how many of them included television commercials. With the exception of L7's facetious inclusion of "The Clapper" theme song into their early sets, I came up with none.

I looked out at the crowd, looking for signs of intelligence. My wife said she couldn't shake this weird feeling that we were somehow stuck in a scene out of 1984, a book I finally got around to reading last year; the masses of people all in one place, having their minds polluted by prefab music rife with the double-speak of reveling in rebellion by reinforcing the status quo: the giant screen telling you what to

drive, what to listen to, where to buy your food.

The next few performers, including Jennifer Love Hewitt and Wayne Wonder (quite possibly the first Jamaican performer with no apparent sense of rhythm who I've ever seen), were followed by one of the N'Sync guys, who took the stage and, in a fit of patriotism, mangled the "Star Spangled Banner" in ways that Roseanne Barr could only dream of. As he warbled away, some in the crowd seemed unsure of what to do, while others stood up, put their right hands over their hearts and began to sing along, just as they were taught in school. After a few sharp glances from their neighbors, those not participating soon stood up and joined in. We remained sitting, shaking our heads. Orwell, not to mention Pavlov, would've been proud.

After a few more acts, including some jerk-off from New Zealand who made his debut album in his bedroom on a home computer, the latest batch of *American Idol* hopefuls were trotted out to sing their rendition of that wretched "Proud to Be an American Where At Least I Know I'm Free" song. Again, nearly all in attendance stood up and sang along while my wife and I sat there looking at each other and muttering, "What the fuck is up with all this flag-waving bullshit?" I mean, this being a cross-section of the American mainstream, I can understand a certain degree of mindless patriotism, but this was bordering on the ridiculous.

Then it hit me. KIIS-FM is owned by Clear Channel. According to the Associated Press, CNN and numerous other news sites, Clear Channel funded a number of the "spontaneous" pro-war rallies that popped up to counter all the anti-war demonstrations that took place prior to when the president-appointed decided to give the finger to the rest of the world and invade Iraq. This wasn't a concert. It was a mass brain scrubbing for 50,000 people.

The whole concert, from the performers with pumped-in music to the squeaky-clean attendees to the flag waving, born again Christian revival at Disneyland vibe to the television commercials beamed from giant screens to vendors hawking overpriced food and drink (four bucks for a twelve-ounce bottle of water), suddenly felt like one of those mass rallies Riefenstahl documented in *Triumph of the Will*. A bunch of sad-sack pop hopefuls standing in for Messrs. Goering, Goebbels and Hitler. And I was Al Jolson, sitting dead center in blackface and a yarmulke.

The final insult came courtesy of Sugar Ray, a band that once opened up for a band I was in way back when and sucked just as bad then as they do now. They began with their latest hit, a melding of a stolen Gap Band chorus to a riff stolen from the Sweet's "Love is Like Oxygen," and again, all the kids screamed and sang and went through all the motions. Two songs later, their singer offered up some pearl of wisdom that ran along the lines of: "I know people have different opinions about the situation in Iraq, but I just want to say that I support the troops and thank them for all that they're doing for us,"



and my jaw dropped.

Look, I can wholly get behind "supporting the troops," especially considering that they have no clue as to why they're really over there clearing the way for Halliburton to move in and make some real money off the second largest oil reserve on the planet, but what, pray tell, are they directly doing for ME?!? Seeing as I don't own a penny of stock in Vice President Cheney's former place of employment or any of the other companies making the big bucks by "rebuilding" a country they blew to pieces, not fucking much. We waged war against a country that had not attacked us, had made no credible threat to attack us, and we did so under the pretense that they just *might* attack us one day. So, the argument that the troops are protecting us from the imminent threat of an Iraqi terrorist attack just doesn't wash. Nevertheless, the crowd roared its approval and I sat, dumbfounded that a band with supposed ties, however tenuous, to punk's "old school" would say something so blatantly dumb.

Two songs later, completely oblivious to the hypocrisy of a talentless, mainstream band whose "songs" are nothing more than shoddy splice jobs done with the creativity and finesse of a blind kid with Down's syndrome running full-bore through a crystal shop, he dedicated a song to Joey and Dee Dee Ramone, "for being such a

huge inspiration for the band," then launching into a medley of their first single and the worst version of "Blitzkrieg Bop" I have ever heard. I looked skyward and saw birds dropping from the sky, stunned or killed by the wretched cacophony emanating from the speaker towers, and it took all I had within me to refrain from setting fire to one of the handy program booklets provided to us all and lobbing it in outrage into the crowd directly in front of me, who were chanting the "hey ho, let's go" part they learned from some car commercial. I looked to my right and saw that my wife's face had lost all color. She ain't all

that big on punk rock, but she does love the Ramones and is well aware how seriously offensive an act the profaning of their good name is.

After six hours of waiting and suffering through some of the worst musical acts ever to grace the airwaves, the mass slaughter of countless plants and wildlife within hearing distance, the outrage of seeing all that I hold dear insulted, the memory of two personal heroes irreparably soiled, and half of a thoroughly disappointing set by Santana, my wife and I looked at each other, said, "Fuck Kiss; this ain't worth it," and bailed. Just as we were leaving, some asshole in front of us sparked a fatty of some of the rankest dirtweed I've ever smelled. I was truly embarrassed for the guy, not only because he was apparently unaware of the fact that concert etiquette requires that you don't bring crap weed to a concert, but that he wasted it on a gig that wasn't even worth his pathetic stash.

As we drove home, I looked at my visibly shaken wife and told her, "You know, I've found myself in some mighty hairy situations in my life. I've been shot at. I've been beaten within an inch of my life. I've jumped from moving vehicles. Numerous riots. I've even found myself enduring an LA Guns/Bullet Boys/Warrant Wank-A-Thon as a favor to a friend. Never, ever have I witnessed a more appalling spectacle than what we just sat through."

"Nor I," she said. "Thing is, just like the saying goes, what you survive makes you stronger. What, if any, positives can we glean from what we've been through?"

I looked out at the road before me, pondering her question. This is what I came up with:

1. The effects of media brainwashing are in full effect at the modern-day "rock" concert.

2. Aside from making spiky hair and studded belts essential fashion accessories for teenage prom queens and housewives alike, punk's "explosion" into the mainstream a decade ago had no impact whatsoever on the greater American social fabric.

3. It is now painfully clear that striving for mediocrity is what the American dream is all about.

4. All the same things I was disgusted by with this country twenty years ago are even more prevalent today.

5. I'm still not "normal" and, judging from the crowd of 50,000 that I found myself surrounded by, it is unlikely that I ever will be.

6. Wearing a shirt with gibberish on it (that says "fuck off" if you fold it horizontally) will get you some mighty strange looks from people walking past you trying to figure out what it says.

7. Remaining seated when the Star Spangled Banner is ringing from the four corners of a football stadium will get you some mighty strange looks.

8. No matter how hard they try, Sugar Ray bites the weenie.

As for my wife, she now fully understands the importance of subcultures like punk. She understands why I am still an active participant in said subculture some twenty-three years after Black Flag taught me what to do with the inspiration I got from Kiss. Most importantly, she now completely gets why Todd, Sean, my other Razorcake brethren, all the bands, writers, artists, scenesters and assorted weirdos put so much effort into our comparatively small social/musical niche: when the mainstream spends its time softly cooing lies into your ear while forcing utter garbage down your throat, finding (or building, if necessary) and nurturing some kind of an alternative is essential. For that reason alone, all the anguish of finally enduring my own personal hell was worth it.

Now, if I could get her to grasp why I believe the television show *Sigmund the Sea Monster* was the perfect socio-political metaphor for US/Soviet Union relations and the resulting Cold War, life would be rendered even easier.

—Jimmy Alvarado

JIMMY ALVARADO



Rich Mackin

The Twisted Balloon

...the most spiritual guy I know also is famous for his dirty limericks and whisky drinking.

ZEN AND THE ART OF BEING AN AGING PUNK

I moved to Portland, Oregon for one thing. I left April 1 – which some of you know is the original New Year's Day – so I thought it would be fitting to think of this as the start of a new life; to get rid of the bad parts of me and work on the good.

For one, I was going to try and go freegan (Freegan = free + vegan, which means I avoid buying or otherwise promoting the consumption of animal products, but if, say, someone gives you that last slice of pizza they were about to throw away, why not?)

For two, I was going to try and stop saying meaninglessly offensive words. For instance, "fuck." Oddly, I don't think fuck is an offensive term for, well, actually fucking someone, but otherwise it's totally either random or illogical. If fucking is sex, you wouldn't say "Have sex you!" to someone who almost hits you with a car. And surely you wouldn't say, "What the sex having is this?" in shock of something. I'm going to stop saying "hell" and "damn," not because of blasphemy, but because these are words involving a mythology I do not believe in.

For three, I wanted to step up on my spirituality.

For four, I wanted to read more.

I'll get to number three through number four. Reading. You're doing it right now. I am not going to get all into "reading is better than TV" arguments that so many people I hang out with do. It's not the medium itself; it's the specifics. I have seen documentaries on PBS and the Discovery Channel that blew my mind, and while I could READ about how humans, chimps and dolphins act and have it affect my views on life, it was much more meaningful to SEE it on TV. Furthermore, I think someone reading Tom Clancy's latest or a bad romance novel isn't in any position to badmouth most TV. Still, reading as a whole is more

educational than TV, and I can bring a book more places than my TV. So, one of the first things I did at my new home was get a library card.

I once saw a sticker that said, "The real punks are at the library!" It does strike me as odd how the activists and the punks like to reinvent the wheel, time and time again. A group of funny looking kids deciding they should start an infoshop where people can get together and hang out and there could be books... which is basically the library. Not to knock infoshops – you won't see punk bands or anarchist puppet shows or any of that at even the coolest library – but if you want to reach out to the community, don't expect the community to come to you. Get involved with what is there. Just think, there is a building in your town with books you can take and read for free!

Obviously, some places have cooler library systems than others. Salt Lake City has the absolute greatest library in America, and if every city had a place like that, the country would be a better place. Here in my new home of Portland, they have a pretty great library system, the jewel in the crown being a really good reserve system that allows me to order books from anywhere in the county and have them delivered to my branch within a few days. Add this to lots of unstructured time, and I am reading boy. Do I want to start thinking about spirituality? The library has books aplenty for me to research.

Actually, on top of that, Southeast Portland is a virtual all-you-can eat salad bar of Buddhist spirituality. I can barely walk ten blocks from my house without passing a temple, dojo, or other spiritual center.

It always irks me when I listen to songs like "Religious Vomit" by the Dead Kennedys and I hear lines like, "All religions suck." Many other punk bands take this attitude. By all religions, they tend to mean any form of Christianity, as well as Judaism and Islam. I have yet to

hear anyone really complain about Buddhism or Zen. Then again, Buddhism, Zen, and such usually contain texts that go on about how they are not really religions.

I, myself, am not about to call myself a Buddhist, or a practitioner of Zen. I'm just some guy who really likes and respects these concepts and arguably knows more about them than the average American might. For someone like myself to think that I understand formal Zen practice or that I could be Buddhist is like some kid buying a few albums and saying that makes him a punk. I have read a lot of books, digested some of the stuff I read, meditated a few times, and here I am. Maybe I am on the way to becoming Buddhist, much as a Clash LP and a Rancid CD might lead you into becoming punk.

What I am, officially, is a minister of the Universal Life Church. I get asked about this a lot, since I often use the term "reverend" in my name. Yes, it is real. Yes, I have performed weddings (three at the time of this writing.) Granted, everyone in the Church is a reverend. It's a very democratic religion. It's an, dare I say, anarchist religion. There is no sense of hierarchy, no need for structure; you believe what you believe, as long as your belief system does not counter others' ability to do the same. This is mistaken sometimes as: "So, you can believe anything you want?" Well, no, what you believe is what you believe; you can't decide what you believe in. You can only form your belief system through research and learning. The idea is you don't have to pick out one system of thought that someone else has and follow that; you allow yourself to come to terms with how you think things work, based on what strikes you as true.

By now, people who are familiar with my writings might be getting worried that my spirituality is going to interfere with me being funny any more. That is a typical problem with living in a society founded by Puritans. What Americans often have a problem

realizing is that spirituality is no big deal. We get so caught up with all the crap in our lives and we distance modern life and society from nature. We confuse spirituality with religion, which means you don't walk around with spirituality, you set aside a portion of the week to sit and get your spirituality over with. To heck with that, the most spiritual guy I know also is famous for his dirty limericks and whisky drinking.

Zen teaching is filled with lighthearted teachings, if not outright jokes. One well-known quote involves a student who asks his master if dogs have within them "Buddha nature." The master's response is "woof."

My favorite story involves the tradition that any Zen monastery must accept a lodger if he can prove he understands Zen better than the residents. At one monastery, a dim-witted, one-eyed monk opens the door to a wanderer who challenges him. Since Zen often deals with intangibles, the dialogue is symbolic, not verbal. The master sees the visitor later and asks how the dialogue went. "Well, I held up one finger, symbolizing the Buddha, when your colleague held up two, showing Buddha and his teachings. I held up three, symbolizing the Buddha, his teachings, and his followers. Your colleague then held up his fist, demonstrating that all of these are part of a larger whole, thus proving he understands Zen more than I, and so I bid my due."

As the travelling monk leaves, the master sees the one-eyed monk who relates the story as: "Well, the jerk holds up a finger, to mock that I only have one eye! So I decide to be gracious, and use two fingers to congratulate him for having two eyes. Then he dares to make fun of the fact that between us, we have only three eyes total, at which point I made a fist to punch him, and he left."

To some extent, this shows how the same events can be interpreted as totally different, depending on the viewer's mindset, but it's also as funny as any "walks into a bar"

joke I have ever heard.

I must say one thing if I am going to discuss Buddhism at all. Please remember that Buddhism, like Taoism, Hinduism, Islam, and virtually all religions, was written in another language than English, and comes from another culture. This means that some terms are used differently than our English-speaking, Christian-based, short-attention-span literal American equivalents. Buddha is not a god; he was a man who became enlightened. Over five hundred years before Christ was born, Siddhartha Guatama became enlightened, which means he became a Buddha, or enlightened one. He was son of a leader (some legends refer to him as a prince) of the Shakya clan, and so is also known as Shakyamuni Buddha, the Buddha Sage of the Shakya clan. And this is where I want to make my point – he was a relatively trim Indian guy. The “fat Chinese guy” who is so often referred to as Buddha is Hotei. Hotei is A Buddha, but he is not *the* Buddha.

This is one of the differences between Buddhist and Christian thought. As important as the founder and trailblazer of the system of thought was, the Buddha was not and is not thought to be the only one to be able to have such a mystical experience. As Alan Watts, the first major Western champion of Zen says, “What the Christians did was to stop that Gospel cold by saying, ‘Okay, Jesus is God, but NO ONE ELSE!’” So, for lack of the spiritual experience of Jesus, nobody has been able to live the religion of Jesus. Instead, they have lived the religion ABOUT Jesus, which is a very different thing, because he’s been put up on a pedestal and worshipped at a distance, and his example in life has been rendered ineffective. “What would Jesus do?” Likely not go on and on about some other guy as if all the work was done and over with.

So, with all this newfound appreciation of spirituality and such, I am meditating. Yep, I sit Zazen. This means I spend time cross-legged on a cushion staring a few feet away and doing little more than breathing. As the priest at the dojo I attend says, “It’s almost always a conversation stopper... every time I explain to someone... that I engage in the religious practice of sitting stock still for thirty minutes or more, gazing at a blank wall.” The point of such meditation is not to relax, though it is relaxing to me. It is not a way to pray. (Well, it can be in some Buddhist sects, but that segues from what we are talking about, and if you want to research, go ahead.) The idea of

Zen meditation is not to think about something, but to clear the mind of thoughts.

As Alan Watts says, “Thinking is talking to yourself. If I talk all the time, I don’t hear what anyone else has to say. If I talk to myself all the time, I don’t have anything to think about except thoughts.” I realize

neither is limited to Buddhism.

The first is based on the concept of Tonglen – which is a way of being mindfully compassionate as taught by Tibetan Buddhists. There are specific breathing techniques that go along with this, so please do not think I am providing you with more than a basic idea. Imagine

them, and how many people see it happen. Take a moment to feel for all involved. This is one of the few spiritual exercises that is ideal for traffic. If YOU hate being stuck in traffic, think of how everyone else is stuck in traffic as well, and how they all feel as upset as you. (Okay, the bike rider in me does have to say that if you all rode bikes in rush hour instead, you wouldn’t have this problem.)

Another really cool concept is something I understand that the Dalai Lama and other holy people do. Every person that the Dalai Lama meets, he thinks to himself, “Wants to be happy, doesn’t want to suffer.” Try that. Think of someone. Anyone. They want to be happy and don’t want to suffer. Try it when walking down the street. That pretentious businessman who walked into you because he was engaged in cell phone chatting wants to be happy and doesn’t want to suffer. The smelly bum wants to be happy and doesn’t want to suffer. You want to be happy and don’t want to suffer. This doesn’t suddenly mean everyone is the same, but it sure makes it easier to think of everyone as being in the same boat. It also makes it harder to demonize someone. George W. Bush is still an asshole, but I have to admit that he wants to be happy and doesn’t want to suffer, which means he has at least that in common with me. (Lying, thieving dictator that he is.)

I have been having a weird run of luck as I write things lately. I made one point about how people who think Eastern culture is just plain better than Western culture is like saying that chopsticks are just plain better than forks. This conversation didn’t get very far because a friend mentioned that forks are tools of the aristocracy that the common people took to, while chopsticks are simple. You can’t just walk into the woods, find two reeds or sticks and whittle a fork the way you can with chopsticks. Wow, my whole point got corrupted and now I make a new point: chopsticks, at least as a concept, ARE better than forks, because you can come by them in a much more natural way. I guess this can be a metaphor for Eastern and Western religion, after all. In the West we need the Torah, the word of Christ, a structured religion. Eastern spirituality usually focuses on lessons learned from observing nature. The Tao doesn’t quote one prophet; it examines water flow and nature. So, I guess the most important lesson to take out of this column is to eat with chopsticks.

—Rich Mackin



ONE WELL-KNOWN QUOTE INVOLVES A STUDENT WHO ASKS HIS MASTER IF DOGS HAVE WITHIN THEM “BUDDHA NATURE.” THE MASTER’S RESPONSE IS “WOOF.”

that nobody could stand to follow this advice more than me.

Okay, I could go on about Zen for pages, and still come no closer to really explaining anything. (Which is partially the point.) I could try to explain meditation techniques, but reading about how to do something physical usually never gets it right, especially when the writer is a goofball who barely knows what he is talking about. So, instead, let me segue into a few things I just learned in the last month that are really cool. Both come from Buddhist sources, but

you see something bad. For instance, a guy kicks a puppy. More than likely, you can feel compassion for the puppy. Now, think about the guy – anyone who would be so cruel to kick a puppy must have had something really bad happen to him somewhere along the line, so you can open yourself to be compassionate towards him. Now, consider how it hurts you to some extent to see this happen, so feel compassion for yourself. Almost done. Now, think about how if this happened, how many puppies get kicked, how many people kick



Rev. Nørb

Love, Nørb



i wanna see the priests rocking out in their collars in front of the band, going "PLAY SOME SKYNYRD!" [Band: "We just PLAYED some Skynyrd!" Priests: "WELL PLAY SOME MORE GODDAMN SKYNYRD!!!"]

Nørb and sausage picture quote: OUR MIGHTY WARRIORS OF SIMULATED GRISTLE WILL MAKE WIDOWS OF YOUR WIVES, ORPHANS OF YOUR SONS, AND HAREM GIRLS OF YOUR DAUGHTERS!!!

Hello. Summer is officially on the clock. I have comic books to read, and if no one is gonna ask Earth's Greatest Living Advice Columnist™ any questions, i am gonna just take this time to talk about the comic books i plan to read this summer. Remember, i can talk about my comic book collection for a lot longer than you can stand to read about it, so if ya know what's good for your continued psychic well-being, you'll start making with the desperate queries sans undue delay (and don't think you can wait me out and get me to cough up more pieces like last month's [well-deserved] correction to *Blender's* alleged "Rock Goddess Top 50" if you don't send in questions – mainstream music mags only hold my attention long enough to really piss me off about once a decade; after that i just shoot 'em straight into the recycling bin as soon as i get 'em, along with the pre-approved Discover™ Card applications and what-not. It's just a more high percentage game plan). But, since you asked, my Plans For The Summer (y'know, on Memorial Day, i was sitting around on my friend Bobby's porch [Bobby is a trashman, but did not record "Surfin' Bird"], and he actually asked me what my "plans for the summer" were. I was initially taken quite aback by the question, as, at least to this intrepid advice columnist, 'twould seem that anyone who asks someone what their "plans for the summer" are is exposing a certain fundamental and complete lack of comprehension as to what the very concept of "summer" entails. I mean, what the fuck do you THINK i'm gonna do during summer? Find a cure for cancer, clone a goat and put air on the moon?) are to sit on the porch reading comic books at every available opportunity, thereby finishing reading my run of Adventure Comics (#300 thru #380 – the original *Tales of the Legion of Super-Heroes* series) (i'm up to #374 right now – Jim Shooter's been scripting since #347, Chemical King and Timber Wolf got inducted last issue, and Win Fucking Mortimer just took over the art chores, whoopee-the-fuck-ding indeed), then start and finish reading my Fantastic Four run (#1-#116, plus the first nine annuals – Nov. 1961 thru Nov. 1971 [inclusive]). To fill in any breaks in the slam-bang sitting-on-the-porch action that may naturally accrue during my arduous summer, i

spent sitting on the porch by shooting baskets in the park by myself whilst drinking thru a straw from a 44 oz. plastic cup full of beer. Thanks for asking (of course, you might, in fact, be thinking to yourself: "Golly, Rev. Nørb – sitting on the porch and reading 132 comic books this summer does not, in fact, seem like a particularly lofty goal. Do you perhaps think you might be... uh... slacking?" And, Treasured Reader, this is a fair question: Reading 132 comic books cover-to-cover in the ninety-one days i calculate are mine to call summer this year ISN'T that lofty of a goal. Why, one only needs average just under 1.42 comic books read per day to make that particular nut. But that, of course, isn't a representative figure, because it doesn't take into account the four or five NEW comic books i buy each week, and will need to read before i can go back to pummeling thru my back issues, – so the actual daily total i'll have to attempt to hit will likely be more like 2.0 than 1.42. Which, still, doesn't seem that backbreaking a schedule, until one fully comprehends exactly what comic books i plan to be reading this summer – I mean, i'm going to be reading EVERY FUCKING LEE/KIRBY ISSUE OF FANTASTIC FOUR EVER EMITTED BY THE HOUSE OF IDEAS, EVER, IN ORDER, IN A ROW. This is, if you think about it [and, shit, why wouldn't you?], likely THE ONLY TIME I WILL EVER GET TO DO THIS, IN MY LIFE, EVER. I will be lucky if i can read ONE per day, so great the miraculous quagmire of four-color genius in which i find myself hopelessly whelmed shall be! I can't just race thru this crap, merely to prove to Bobby, et al, that i am A Man Who Can Make A Schedule And Stick To It – that i can Buckle Down! – that i Get Things Done! – nay! Nay! The Son of Odin says thee NAY!!! [whoops, wrong series! I'm not scheduled to start the Journey Into Mystery/Thor run until summer 2005!] I must have THE MOMENT. I must have the proper temperature! Humidity! Wind speed! Sunlight angles! My feet can't be sweaty! The lawnchair must be relatively free from surface crud! All must be PERFECT ere i begin reading my inaugural-decade-spanning run of FF! I shall stare at each and every page of Fantastic Four #1, burning every Kirby/Ayers delineation [well, the ones that haven't crumbled away and/or been "touched up" by the poor slob with a set of Bic™ Bananas who realized in about 1976 that his comic book woulda been "worth something" if he wouldn'ta used it as tug-o-war bait with the family poodle back in his bewildered youth] into the back of my retinas just as Uday Hussein is reputed to brand the

flanks of his conquests with the letter "U!" [obviously, for "Unus, The Untouchable." Wait, wrong series again! Actually, i read all my Uncanny X-Men comics last summer {technically, i only read the 66 issues before they got canceled in 1970 last summer; since i own every issue of Uncanny X-Men from #1 on out ((1963-present)), i kinda decided that reading almost 40 years of comic books in a row was...uh...TOO STUPID even for me}). I shall learn, know, live and love every crease, tear, fold, wrinkle, and Marvel™ chip [do any of you non-comic-book people know what "Marvel™ chipping" is? I will inform you forthwith, as learning this will make you appear somewhat knowledgeable: In the 1960s, Marvel™ comics were printed on inferior paper, especially the covers. As a result, the covers of Marvel™ comics of this era tend to flake off in brittle little chunks around the edges. The Unscrupulous Comic Dealer trick to circumvent this unsightly, grade-reducing phenomenon? Get a paper cutter and slice the edges off the comic book. This gives the appearance that the comic book has nice, straight edges; it is worth more as a result, so long as no one notices the book has been trimmed. WHY THIS IS GOOD TO KNOW: Apart from not getting stuck with a comic book that's been sliced down to some absurd shape and thinking that's how it's really supposed to look, if you're ever haggling price with a dealer over a 1960s era Marvel™, tell him you think the comic's been "trimmed." He'll deny it, or say it doesn't matter, or say that he doesn't "think so," or claim that that's been "factored into the price," but you will have put yourself in a far superior bargaining position as a result, guaranteed. Or, on the other hand, if you have a bunch of '60s Marvels with unsightly, chipped edges, just put 'em in a paper cutter, slice off the offending frazzle, and charge top dollar for 'em. No, no, thank me later!]! I shall know each and every striation and tear as well as i know that intricate latticework of veins on my own penis!!! I shall snuffle up the musty decompositional funk of FF #7, ["The Master of Planet X!"]! I shall sensually lick each and every crumbling slab of foolishly-applied, now-brown-and-crispy Scotch™ tape affixed to the spine of FF #13 ["The Red Ghost!"]! I shall do all manner of freaky things of that nature! I'm in an awful way!!! And while, no, reading comic books on the porch is NOT intended to be my life's crowning achievement, it's close enough that if i never truly do anything great with my life before the foogoo fish toxin takes me for good, i can be content knowing that i at least kicked Plan B's ass from here to Zenn-La.

Rev. Nørb

Imperius Rex!) (and, besides, if i read all 132 comic books this summer, i've still got a hundred and two issues of Amazing Spider-Man i haven't read yet, plus fifty issues of The Incredible Hulk, eighty-one issues of Daredevil, 111 issues of Journey Into Mystery/The Mighty Thor, eighteen of Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D., sixty-eight Strange Tales, sixty-six Tales To Astonish, forty-three Sub-Mariners, sixty-one Tales Of Suspenses, forty-four Captain Americas, forty-three issues of Iron Man, sixty-seven issues of Sgt. Fury and his Howling Commandos, eighteen Silver Surfers, one each of Amazing Fantasy and Iron Man & Sub-Mariner, about thirty-odd annuals and then some stuff like Not Brand Echh! and Amazing Adventures and Astonishing Tales that i don't even remember what box i filed 'em in – essentially, i've got something like 975 comic books from the '60s and early '70s i have yet to, but intend to, read. Well, holy fuck, what am i wasting all this time blabbering at YOUR punk asses for then??? ON WITH THE ADVICE COLUMN!!!).

Boris The Sprinkler – can you do two dates with BRIEFS and EPOXIES?
8/21 mpl / 8/23 chicago???

Brian A. Peterson
bookchicago.com

Dear Brian:
Well, no, on accounta i called everybody in the band (which was rather difficult as i first had to remember who was IN the band) last week (after a hard day of sitting on the porch reading comic books and drinking beer thru a straw from a 44 oz. plastic cup whilst shooting hoops by myself [i still remain about a 10-20% free throw shooter at best, regardless of how much time i spend shooting free throws every summer {quote me: At the Charity Stripe™, i make Shaquille O'Neal look like Rick fucking Barry}, but i am starting to actually hit my hook shot, and, one must admit, the hook shot is by far the most Nørb-ly of all possible basketball moves {well, other than the trampoline-augmented stuff and that comedy bit where i chase the ref around

the Triple Rock Social Club, hold at the 7th Street Entry. FR 8/22 – Milwaukee, WS hold at 926 E. Center, interim home for The Milwaukee Venue Project (MVP), a non-profit cooperative that's working to open a venue in the city. Let me know if you're into being local support...?

thanks!
toast

Dear Toast:
What the fuck??? Didn't you read the last letter??? I quit the fucking band!!! How many times do i have to tell you people this??? I quit!!! Game over!!! Sheena's microwave est as KAPUT!!! The end!!! Finito!!! Adieu!!! By the way, how much would we get paid?

Løve,
Nørb

In an amusing, yet pointless, sidebar, here's an excerpt from the preceding response, but "corrected" by spell-check:



Dear Rev. Nørb,
Did you really mean all that stuff you wrote last issue about the Top 50 Rock Goddesses?

Questioningly,
The Voice of Reason
Anytown, USA

Dear Voice:
Yeah, especially the thing about Courtney Clark's sister. That's going over pretty well here. Actually, i kind of did conveniently omit the fact that Joan Jett's got a clit the size of a Japanese guy's dick, so, yeah, you've caught me in a lie. Besides, everybody knows that the hottest chick in rock & roll there ever is, was, or shall be is Melody from Josie & The Pussycats (orig. series, ca. 1971), but i intentionally left her off the list because she fucked my buddy Dewey at a party once and i was miffed.

Løve,
Nørb
Hey there norb

with a bucket of water, except it turns out to be confetti, but then the confetti actually turns out to be nanotechnological flesh necrotizing agents and the guy festers hideously, boils, rots, and dies in a matter of seconds}} and told them i quit, effectively ending Boris The Sprinkler as you know it (or at least until the first reunion show), which is a shame, really, as i did so dreadfully want to show off my new mullet to the mulletudes before it grows out, although i don't see why anyone would let me back into the Fireside Bowl after my shitty "performance" there in February and i don't think i'm allowed west of the St. Croix any more either. Ah well. Thank you for your interest in Boris The Sprinkler.

Løve,
Nørb

Moving right along...

Greetings.. how are things? I am working on the following dates for the Briefs/Epoxies tour in your area: TH 8/21 – Minneapolis, MN hold at

What the fuck??? Didn't you read the last letter??? I quit the fucking band!!! How many times do i have to tell you people this??? I quit!!! Game over!!! Chinese microwave ecstasy CAPOTE!!!

And the knee-slapping hilarity continues on unabated...

Dear Rev. Nørb,
It doesn't look like there are going to be very many jokes in this column. Could you perhaps just spare the gimmick of answering letters and just get to the jokes?

Concerned,
A Reader

Dear A:
Good point. Okay, here goes: Q: What do German fighter pilots have for breakfast? A: Luftwaffles! I made that one up. That's why it's so funny. Okay, here's one i didn't

Rev. Nørb

make up: Q: What's the difference between a Catholic chick and a Jewish chick? A: A Catholic chick has real orgasms and fake jewelry... okay, i'm sorry, i just feel that there might yet be someone i failed to offend last issue (most common reaction: "huh, off the record, I enjoyed your column – but when Courtney Clark is beating your head to coconut milk with her bass, i'll be standing there laughing at you like everybody else"). On a far more urgent tack, here's further fuel for the "Earth's Greatest Roller" inferno:

Just a couple of suggestions on the topic of Earth's Greatest Roller. Would not April Wine with their song "Roller" be a contender? And my personal vote for Earth's Greatest Roller is

NON-ROLLER, and i'd be willing to wager his life on it! (hmm... and, since we've now broached both the subject of basketball AND the subject of wagering, would you, gentle reader, care to know to what depths my life has eroded to? Sure ya would! At this point in my life, i, Rev. Nørb, Earth's Greatest Rocker and Advice Columnist, am now making – and WINNING – hundred dollar wagers on the NBA playoffs. I think the only step beneath that is making and LOSING hundred-dollar wagers on the NBA playoffs [the secret to my success? It's simple! First off, find someone who likes the Boston Celtics. That actually might be all the information you need to become a successful riverboat gambler like myself, but, in case you need to take this in baby steps, i'll flesh the con-

you're scoring at home, that number is "two"] because you saw the big Bud Light banner out in front when you were driving home from Taco Bell™ that afternoon, and wanting to walk over to the church picnic because your cup is empty and you could really use a fucking beer, but not going because your dad might be there and you're wearing jeans with holes in the knees and he'd murder ya if he saw you there dressed in such a fashion) (seriously, seriously, i really wanted to go. I mean... i wanna see the priests rocking out in their collars in front of the band, going "PLAY SOME SKYNYRD!" [Band: "We just PLAYED some Skynyrd!" Priests: "WELL PLAY SOME MORE GODDAMN SKYNYRD!!!" [actually, if they were playing for Catholic priests, one must wonder why i

for the record, i have nothing against Beethoven, although i am hard-pressed to understand why he wrote all this music for cartoon soundtracks when they didn't even have cartoons back then

Bon Scott, who crooned "I'm a rocker, I'm a roller..." on *Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap*. He not only lived by these words but also died by them as he refused to "roll" over, even while choking on his own vomit. Just some thoughts for your consideration.

Chris Pretti
Milwaukee WI

Chris, you ignorant slut:

First off, i believe the line in the April Wine song in question is "SHE's a roller... a high rolling baby," ergo, by all indications, April Wine were merely commenting on the rollerli-ness of another – namely, "she." And, of course, "She." She told me that she loved me, and like a fool i believed her from the start. And "She," She said she'd never hurt me, then She turned around and broke my heart. So, therefore, Chris, one might ask Why? Why am i standing here? Missing her, and wishing She was here? Hey! She only did me wrong now! Hey! I'm better off alone! But, then again, it could be argued that now i know just why She, She keeps me hangin' 'round – She needs someone to walk on, so her feet don't touch the ground. Don't touch the ground, you understand. But i love her! Love Her! Need her! Need her! Love her, need her, Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah! So, obviously, it's a rather complex problem to where no easy solution appears apparent, other than you repenting your obvious WRONGness. As far as Bon Scott goes, first off, a-DUH, one can't be both a "Rocker" AND a "Roller," because ROCK and ROLL are both very jealous gods, and, further, were such a thing possible, then, i, Rev. Nørb, would not merely be Earth's Greatest Rocker, as evinced on my CD release of the same name, currently available in the Hucklebuck section of your local prerecorded musical entertainment emporium or by calling the number on your screen, but Earth's Greatest Roller as well, and we would not be having this discussion. Secondly, your whole argument is foist upon its own half-churned petard by your own observation that Bon Scott, in fact, did NOT roll when the chips were down – nor, in point of fact, did he roll when the chips started coming back UP, presumably with the fish and the gravy in hot vomitose pursuit. That man is a

cept out further: 1. Inform Celtics Fan that Boston's soft perimeter game will be stymied utterly and/or plays directly into the hands of the fast break offense of the New Jersey Nets. 2. Insist {correctly} that the Celtics suck shit, and will be utterly manhandled by the much more physical New Jersey team. 3. Repeat 1 & 2 continually, increasing volume and number of swear words utilized with each repetition, until Celtics Fan is so irate that a fifty-dollar wager on the series is proposed and agreed to. 4. This is the important part: DO NOT BACK OFF NOW! INCREASE the intensity of thine tauntitude! Insist {correctly} that BOSTON AIN'T GONNA WIN A GAME!!! – NOT ONE FUCKING GAME!!! – against the Nets. THEY WON'T WIN A GAME!!! FOUR AND OUT!!! SWEEP!!! SWEEP!!! SWEEP!!! Really start screaming now, waving your arms around like a frickin' nut, making sure the entire bar is watching the two of you. Break everything into one-syllable chunks, and pound the bar with your fist on each syllable: THE!!! CEL!!! TICS!!! WON'T!!! WIN!!! A!!! GOD!!! DAMN!!! GAAAAAAAME!!!, thusly riling/challenging/calling out Celtics Fan in such a fashion that 5. a proviso whereby a sweep of the best-of-seven series DOUBLES the payoff is proposed and agreed to. Then, four games later, 6. Count your money. YES, FOLKS, IT'S THAT EASY!) (and, further, since the subjects of basketball AND beer AND Catholicism have been at least rudimentarily penetrated at least once here, i feel as though it is my civic duty to add my two cents worth to the "What is Wisconsinism?" dialogue that has been sort of kicked around by some fellow columnists, although, truth be told, i don't find the subject particularly gripping any more and kinda wish it would just drop off and go away like that hunk of my brother's umbilical cord did, but, since you asked [you DID ask, didn't you?], here goes: Wisconsinism is filling a 44 oz. plastic cup with Pabst, walking to the Webster School playground to shoot baskets by yourself, hearing a band in the distance playing "Gimme Three Steps" by Lynyrd Skynyrd, realizing that the music is coming from the St. Matthew's church picnic [i think St. Matthew's parish probably holds the all-time record for parish-ioners-turned-Razorcake-contributors {and if

didn't hear any Gary Glitter songs] [actually, i seriously kinda wanna be in a band that plays at a church picnic at least once. I dunno what my stage banter would be, though. "Hey, Paul #14! Look at that garbage can with all the flies around it! It kinda looks like something from the scary parts of the Book of Revelation! Get thee behind me, Abaddon! Thy time hath not yet come!" ...oh well, it's a work in progress]. Also, when i was about nine or ten, i won a really cool hat at the St. Matthew's church picnic, it was sorta like a plastic-weave porkpie, with a sticker on the front that said "I'm an alcoholic... in case of emergency, BUY ME A BEER!" and then it had a little simulated can of Black Label attached to the side [back when Black Label cans were still orange] with elastic bands. I also won a big stuffed dog, but he was kind of lame, but if they had any more of those hats, that would have rocked. "Fuck the Mötley Crüe mirror, i'm gonna win that 'I'M AN ALCOHOLIC' hat if it KILLS me!") (in an unrelated event, i wrote my new, as-yet-non-existent band's second big hit that afternoon: "Smokin' Pot at the Church Picnic." Our first big hit is gonna be "Army of the Pinecone Men." Bet the ranch on it, podner!). Further, taking your line of thinking to its logical conclusion would seem to point towards a scenario whereby Beethoven, for the Christ's sake, might very well be Earth's Greatest Roller (by virtue of, of course, his rolling over), and, Chris, i'm sure you'll readily admit that that is a state of affairs one shouldn't hope to descend to (though, for the record, i have nothing against Beethoven, although i am hard-pressed to understand why he wrote all this music for cartoon soundtracks when they didn't even have cartoons back then). Please enjoy your vomit.

Løve
Nørb

And, our final letter of the issue:

Dear Rev. Nørb,
Essentially no one is really sending in questions for you to answer, are they?

Perceptively,
A. Nother Reader

Rev. Nørb

Dear A. –

Hmm. That appears to be more or less the case. People must think i actually feel like thinking about things to write about on my own, and, i can assure you, this is not the case, except for comic books, which i would rather read than write about, which somewhat defeats the purpose, much like a fail-safe curse applied to the Justice League by one of those Earth-3 do-bad-ders. I simply am not finding a large amount of terribly interesting things going on in and around the world of punk rock right now that i feel particularly compelled to comment upon, and i'm trying not to default to the Mere Curmudgeon state, as i don't think that's particularly interesting, either, so, therefore, i kind of need to be supplied with things to write about,

Chicago Blackout and decided that it would be Some Kinda Wonderful if i drank so much that i barfed over the balcony railing down onto the main floor during a band (preferably the Spits, owing to the various biological similarities between spitting and puking i spouse [heck, they're practically kissing cousins!]), and was planning on writing my column about the night of certain glory i thought i was setting myself up for... but, to make a long story short, try as i might, i simply could not drink myself to the puke-italational level; my plan fizzled, and i was left merely bloated and out of sorts (i blame the staff – who cut me off from the free beer i had been theretofore embezzling – courtesy of the Secret Special You Drink Free All Weekend cup slipped me by Timmy Vulgar – simply because I

TAIN OF ALL ADVICE!!! WHY DOST THOU NOT SEEK MY SAGE COUNSEL??? Is it because i already named not only my new band – “Burp Tomorrow & The Strange Lasers” – but also named my new band's guitarist – “Buck Bottles” – even though my alleged new band is composed of no one but myself at this time? Is it because i want to shoot a porno movie called “Negative Behaviour” where the entire thing is shot in negative – i.e., so everyone's skin is blue and their pubic hair is white – just to see if it actually “works” on any level? DO YOU DOUBT THE VERACITY OF MY HOLY TEXTS MERELY DUE TO SOME MODERATE MARVEL™ CHIPPING OR SIMILAR DEFECT??? ARE YOU PEOPLE TELLING ME THAT I GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF



because the things i actually find interesting right now have little in common with Punk Rock, yet, Punk Rock is What I Do, so i'm-a mighty discombobulated as a result (Hey, should we talk music for a change? Sure, let's do it! Ya wanna know the last record i bought? It's called *Metal Fingers Presents Special Herbs, Vol. I & II*. It's on High Times™ Records [Mortifyin' Trivia Note: the original Angry Samoans logo is actually property of – gak! – High Times™ magazine, because it was created on company time by cartoonist John Holmstrom. No shit]. Ya wanna know why i bought it? I'll TELL ya why i bought it! I bought it because it's in a gatefold sleeve, and the entire front cover is page 11, panel 6 of *Fantastic Four Annual #2*, and the whole back cover is page 6, panel 4 of *Fantastic Four #87*, except that, in each case, Doctor Doom has been given gold teeth and a real person's eyes – even though, as it turns out, all the songs on the record are named after fucking SPICES and the only good track is “Shallots,” but i don't care, because at least there's one good song on the fucking thing and the front and back cover are huge Jack Kirby drawings of DOCTOR FUCKING DOOM from the very same run of comic books i intend to make my life's mission to read this summer! Well LA DE FUCKING DA, i AM the KING OF THE MOTHER-SLAPPIN' NIGHT TIME WORLD, BAY-BEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!! CRASH!!! THOOM!!! SKRAK!!! KRUNTCH!!!). I actually had a fairly decent idea for a column last month that was at least tangentially music-based, as i was at the

WAS NOT IN A BAND! I mean, the noive! I'm writing their congressman! It's like, well NO, i'm NOT in a band. BUT I HAVE A CUP!!! What the fuck's it to ya, scullery maid??? Trust me: If i was IN a band, and was playing here tonight, you'd be fucking pleased as punch to offer me free beer if i would make us stop, so SERVE ME, WENCH-O-TRON?, SERVE ME!!! Don't tell me you don't WANT me to puke off the balcony tonight?!?!). Alas; vomiting, like erections, often arrives when least appreciated, and boogies in one's hour of need. My Lord, My Lord, Why Have You Forsaken Me?... anyway, my inability to cap the entire weekend off with a hot torrent of beer foam and stomach-acid-laden Death From Above left me quite bereft of column ideas (i couldn't even show up the Chris Farley motherfucker who got up and sang “Emotional Rescue” – THAT'S low!) (although Friday night when i was getting what's-his-name from the Mystery Girls to toss drinks off the balcony at me and i was boppin' 'em off my head was kinda funny [it was actually funniest when he got kicked out for doing it], but it wasn't the kinda thing one can realistically wrench a column from – not like, say, comic books or anything), and YOU PUNY HUMANS who refuse to send me pleas for help are hardly improving the situation (i'd write about how much i'm already sick of the fucking AMAZINGLY LAME LOOKING Hulk movie even though it won't open for another three weeks, but why shoot gamma-ray-transmuted fish in a barrel?). DAMMIT, JIM, I AM THE FOUN-

BEING SOMETHING OTHER THAN A VAST CORNUCOPIA OF COMMON SENSE AND DAZZLING INSIGHT??? IF YOU FOOLS WOULD HAVE ONLY LISTENED TO ME, YOU'D ALL HAVE BET ON THE NETS, BE A HUNDRED BUCKS TO THE GOOD, AND UNCLE BEN WOULD STILL BE ALIVE TODAY!!! BLAST YOU, SCIENCE COUNCIL!!! KRYPTON CAN NEVER BE EVACUATED IN TIME!!! FUCK YOU, GENERAL ZOD!!! CURSE YOU, RED BARON!!! EAT HOT ENLARGING GAS AUGMENTED COCK, KURRGO, MASTER OF PLANET X!!! KRYPTON IS DOOMED!!! KRYPTON IS DOOMED!!! KRYPTON IS DOOO OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO OOMED!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! AND I LIVE BY THE RIVER!!!

That said, please keep those cards and letter coming to:
Rev. Nørb, PO Box 1173, Green Bay WI 54305
and/or nrevorb@greenbaynet.com. Thank you, and have a nice summer (until nuclear reactions deep within the planet's core cause the planet to be violently blown apart) (and/or the Lakers get Malone, Payton AND Pippen in the off-season)





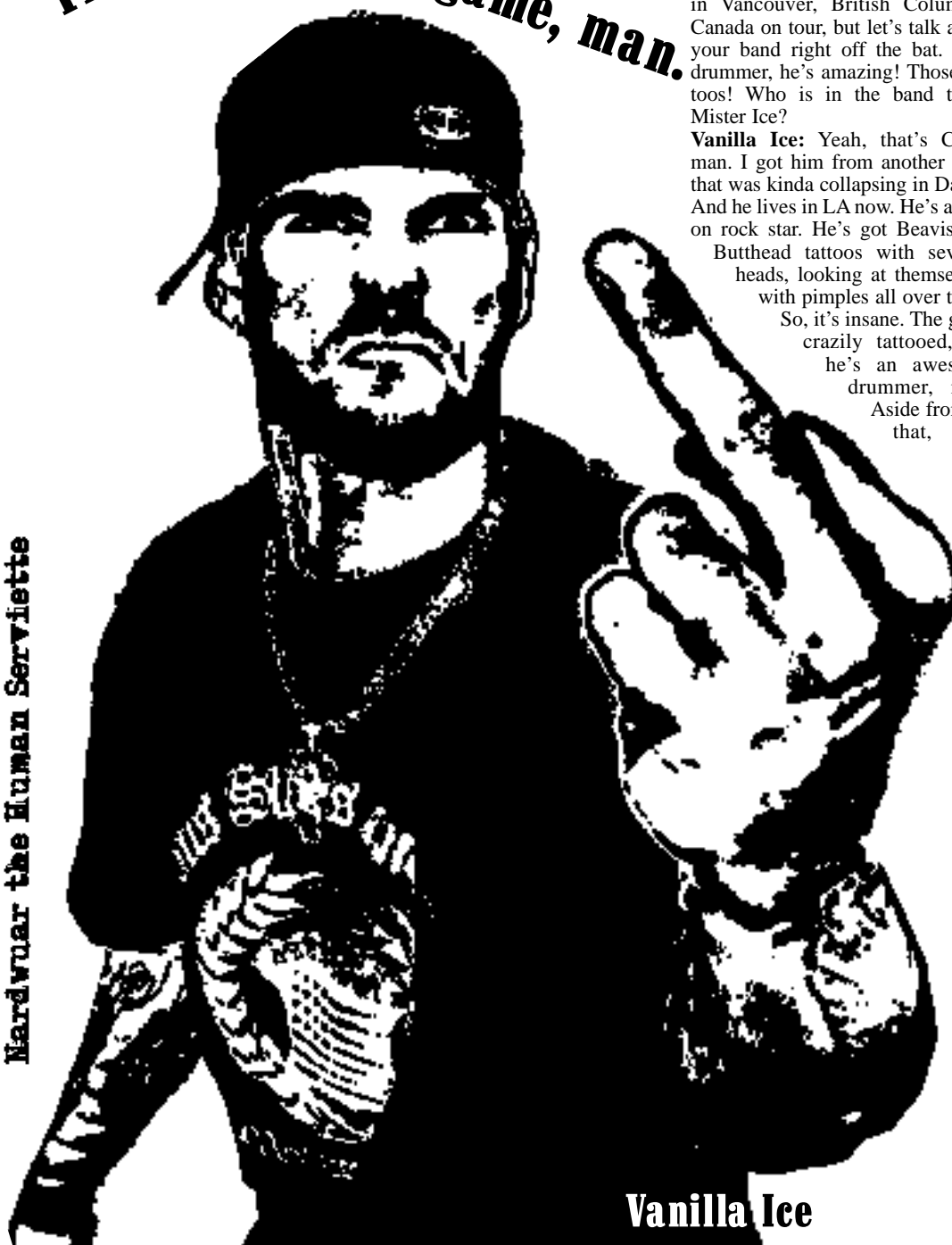
Nardwuar

Who Are You?



There's no shame
in my game, man.

Nardwuar the Human Serviette



Vanilla Ice

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Vanilla Ice: Sometimes people call me Hasselhoff. No, I'm kidding. My name is Rob. It's my real name.

Nardwuar: You are Vanilla Ice!

Vanilla Ice: AKA Vanilla Ice, yeah.

Nardwuar: And now here you are in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada on tour, but let's talk about your band right off the bat. Your drummer, he's amazing! Those tattoos! Who is in the band there, Mister Ice?

Vanilla Ice: Yeah, that's Chris, man. I got him from another band that was kinda collapsing in Dallas. And he lives in LA now. He's a full-on rock star. He's got Beavis and Buttthead tattoos with severed heads, looking at themselves, with pimples all over them.

So, it's insane. The guy's crazily tattooed, but he's an awesome drummer, man.

Aside from all that, he's

just super-talented. He's just insane. He's a great friend, too.

Nardwuar: And you also got Maestro opening for you – the legendary Maestro Fresh Wes, Vanilla Ice! What's up with that? That's amazing!

Vanilla Ice: I didn't know what to expect from him either, y'know? I mean, it's just been amazing, exactly like you said. And he has just been getting much love out here. Canada loves him and we love him too, man. He has been a great guy. He's a super cool friend.

Nardwuar: Are you friends with any other Canadian "ice" people? Like, do you know of Snow at all, Vanilla Ice? Like y' know, ice, "Vanilla Ice," "Snow": cold.

Vanilla Ice: Naw, I like Snow, man. Snow is dope. Uh, y'know there is – let me see – Alanis Morissette. She used to open up for me back in the day. That's funny.

Nardwuar: Alanis opened for you?

Vanilla Ice: Yeah, and Maestro back in the day. Yup, way back, like '90, early '90s.

Nardwuar: So, Vanilla Ice, is tonight at The Royal, is this going...

Vanilla Ice: I was doing some stuff with Avril Lavigne lately. I did something with her and Busta Rhymes up in Buffalo, New York.

Nardwuar: Man, you really are paving the way there, Vanilla Ice.

Vanilla Ice: Naw, I'm not trying to pave a way, man. I'm trying to just live a rock star, jackass lifestyle, bro. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Vanilla Ice, are you back to rap? Are you back to rap? Is it gonna be rap tonight or is it the metal thing? What's going to go on tonight, Vanilla Ice?

Vanilla Ice: We mix it up, man. We're going to bring it back to the old school, y'know. Which is why I did my new CD the way I did with the double CD – one being hip-hop and one being rock, y'know. We're going to introduce all the new stuff as well, but we are going to take you back to the old school. We have fun with it.

Nardwuar: Vanilla Ice, with the album *To the Extreme*, did you coin the phrase "Extreme"? Like, are you responsible for extreme sports there, Vanilla Ice?

Vanilla Ice: [Laughs] Ha, I don't know if I would go that far, man. I think you're stretching it a little bit. No.

Nardwuar: Give yourself some credit, like "extreme," after you did *To the Extreme*, all this extreme stuff was labeled.

Vanilla Ice: Yeah, you're right. That's true. It's kinda funny, a little coincidence there, but uh, naw man, I'm just an extremist in everything I do. I hang glide, I'll parachute, y'know. I do motocross. I do the freestyle stuff and fully condone the jackass lifestyle. I'll do *Celebrity Boxing*. I jumped in the ring with ICP (Insane Clown Posse) recently and smashed a stop sign over a dude's forehead and stapled a dollar to his cheek and his forehead with blood coming out. So I get into some pretty crazy, crazy things.

Nardwuar: Anything for the money. But you don't need the money, do you?

Vanilla Ice: No, it's not for the money, man. It's about the excitement of it. We only live once, y'know. So I'm out here for the passion of just, y'know, being a jackass and having a good time doing it.

Nardwuar: Vanilla Ice, did you pave the way for Snoop Doggy Dogg and Death Row Records? If it wasn't for Vanilla Ice, would there be Snoop Doggy Dogg or Death Row Records?

Vanilla Ice: Man, c'mon, you're stretching it, dude. No, no, no, I mean...

Nardwuar: You did pave the way, though, didn't you? Indirectly, there would be no Snoop Doggy Dogg if there wasn't Vanilla Ice, right?

Vanilla Ice: Well, y'know, you said the word "indirectly." Everybody knows about the Suge Knight incident and, yes, in a way, I contributed to the *Chronic* record, Snoop Dogg and Tupac. I funded, basically, initially, the beginning of that whole Death Row project, indirectly. [laughs] But I...

Nardwuar: Willingly?

Vanilla Ice: Well, no, not willingly, but y'know what? It was all good because I look at it in a positive way. I got way more money than I ever expected today and basically I look at it like it was an investment in some of the best hip hop ever to live and ever come out. So I'm happy for it, y'know? I'm happy.

Nardwuar: Vanilla Ice: "Go Ninja, Go Ninja." Is it true you have returned to "The Ninja" Song?

Vanilla Ice: Yeah, man, we're gonna do a hardcore remake of that song real soon. It was really crazy because we have been playing Canada, man, and I don't even know the words to that song anymore. Just the hook, y'know?

Nardwuar: C'mon! [sings] Go Ninja, go Ninja...

Vanilla Ice: Yeah, yeah. I know that part but I'm just sayin', I'm sayin' we play it in Canada every show and the kids are just yellin' "Ninja Ninja Rap," y'know? And I am like, "No way. Go Ninja." So anyway, make a long story short, I'm doin' a hardcore version of that. Check the website: vanillaice.com. It's gonna be, uh... you can download it for free on there, so check it out.

Nardwuar: Vanilla Ice: *Da Hip Hop Witch*. You made some good connections from that movie, didn't you? *Da Hip Hop Witch*. Wu-Tang!

Vanilla Ice: [laughs] Yeah, yeah. Wu-Tang Clan's on the new record. It was really versatile, this record, y'know? We worked with Slipknot, which is the heavy, hardcore crazy side. And we got Soulfly on there. And then on the hip-hop side we got Public Enemy, Insane Clown Posse and the Wu-Tang Clan. So it was a big collaboration. It was a nice musical adventure for me.

Nardwuar: Your movie, *Cool As...*

Vanilla Ice: *Cool As Ice*.

Nardwuar: Vanilla Ice: "Go Ninja, Go Ninja" Is it true you have returned to "The Ninja" Song?
Vanilla Ice: Yeah, man, we're gonna do a hardcore remake of that song real soon.

Nardwuar: *Cool As Ice*. Is it true that Lisa Marie Presley was going to be in *Cool As Ice* but turned you down, Vanilla Ice? How dare she!

Vanilla Ice: How dare she! No, it's the first I ever heard of that. But it sounds cool. [laughs] It makes good ratings. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Drop that...

Vanilla Ice: Zero and get with the...

[both Nardwuar and Vanilla] Hero!

Nardwuar: Hero! Eyyyee. Boyeeeee with Vanilla Ice. You love the fighting, don't you there, Vanilla Ice?

Vanilla Ice: I love everything, man. There's no shame in my game, man. Like I said, I condone the jackass lifestyle, so fighting and everything, I mean...

Nardwuar: But in the *Cool As Ice* movie there is a lot of Ninja kind of fighting action, wasn't there?

Vanilla Ice: Yeah man. There was some stuff like that going on, y'know? It's exciting.

Nardwuar: So it was natural for you to do the *Celebrity Boxing*?

Vanilla Ice: Yeah, that's what I was telling you a minute ago. I'll get on TV, I'll do it. Anything. There's no shame in my game. I just let 'em hang. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Now what's the deal with that, with Todd Bridges? Before he even entered the ring, they said he's winning. Were they out to get you there, Vanilla Ice?

Vanilla Ice: Well, it was staged. I ain't gonna lie to you. We had like ten minutes between the rounds and then they edited it on TV, y'know? And it was all staged, man. We had fun with it. It was just an exhibition.

Nardwuar: 'Cause that announcer was really mean. He's like, "Vanilla Ice is gonna pull out his purse and hit him with his purse!"

Vanilla Ice: No, man. That's the way boxing is. If you ever watch a boxing match, there's always George Foreman or Sugar Ray Leonard sittin' on the sidelines, y'know, sayin' some good things about other people...

Nardwuar: Keep your chin up. What was with that chin up? Did they tell you to keep your chin up? "Keep his chin up!"

Vanilla Ice: What it is, is it's entertainment, brother. Sit back and enjoy it.

Nardwuar: Was there anybody you could choose to fight? Like, could you choose to fight Eminem?

Vanilla Ice: Uh, I wish I could. I

"m." M-M, Mini-me.

Nardwuar: Eminem.

Vanilla Ice: Well, yo. Y'know what it is? I... it's like this. [raps] It's been a long time since ya seen me on the TV. V-Ice is here for she-zee, takin' what's mine 'cause it's my time to hit y'all with a new style of rhyme. Yeah, this is hip rock. It can't be stopped. I bomb the system, straight to the top. Millions of dollars, I been spendin' em. I love rap. I paved the way for Eminem. Needless to say, I rap back today. Y'all forgot about me, like y'all forgot about Dre. But I'm still here, with no fear, I say what I want and I make sure it's clear.

Nardwuar: Yeah! Vanilla Ice. Take that, Eminem!

Vanilla Ice: [laughs]

Nardwuar: Take that, Eminem! Now I was curious - Eminem had Dr. Dre, you had Public Enemy. What happened with the Public Enemy Association? Like you only recently got Public Enemy back on board.

Vanilla Ice: No, no. Back on board? What do you mean? I did the Stop The Violence tour with them forever ago.

Nardwuar: Well, I mean Eminem had Dre to guide him. Too bad you couldn't have had more of the Public Enemy, right?

Vanilla Ice: Uh, for what? What do I need, what do I need more for, man? I got everything I need right now. I'm not making radio-friendly, commercial, mainstream bullshit. I'm making real music and there's no edits.

Nardwuar: No, but I mean comparing yourself to Eminem. Like Eminem gets a cool movie and you get the *(Teenage Mutant Ninja) Turtles*. Like you've talked about that before, haven't you Vanilla Ice?

Vanilla Ice: Hey, I think the Turtles are cooler than Eminem's *8 Mile*.

Nardwuar: "Go Ninja! Go Ninja!"

Vanilla Ice: Exactly! Y'know how many people are probably singin' that with you right now in there? Every person. I just played every place. I just played in this whole country, man. I'm telling you it's just been "Ninja Rap" everywhere. It's been great.

Nardwuar: Have you heard that Vanilla Ice versus Eminem thing that is on the internet, where they mix the two together?

Vanilla Ice: Yeah, sure.


Nardwuar: It sounds awesome!

Vanilla Ice: Yeah.

Nardwuar: Like, Eminem's beats sound amazing with you!

Vanilla Ice: Yeah, it's 'cause I flow over that stuff y'know? It's fun.

Nardwuar: What's the deal on 3rd Bass? Did they really call you the anti-Christ, Vanilla Ice?

Vanilla Ice: Oh man, I have been called way worse  27

than that. I love it all, man. I sit out here and I burn a path. I'm full-on jackass rock star. And everywhere I go I burn a path, y'know? And it irritates some people and then some people are entertained by it. I'm catering to those who are entertained by it. The ones that it irritates, I don't really care. It's kinda fun, actually, that I can come through and stir up so much of a ruckus. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Did you order a "hit" on 3rd Bass at all?

Vanilla Ice: Ah, man that's the joke, dude. It's all entertainment, man. I've never even met 'em, to be honest with you. So, there's no beef.

Nardwuar: Do you have a tougher time, do you think, Vanilla Ice, because you didn't lose your money? MC Hammer lost his money, but you didn't, so people don't think it's funny. I mean, you survived, you won, but then people don't think that's funny.

Vanilla Ice: I don't think that there's a winning to it about holding onto your money or not. Because in '94 I tried to commit suicide with twenty million dollars in the bank and I couldn't even buy myself a friend. I know some people out there are going, "I'll be your friend, give me a million." No. But for real, I mean I live in Miami so it's a lot of plastic and people just hanging out with silicone and it's pretty crazy out there, so you don't know who your real friends are. And that's why I got back into motocross, I found my real friends and...

Nardwuar: Vanilla Ice, was it real estate that kept you going through the money thing? Are you a big Tom Vu type guy? What's the deal, Vanilla Ice? What's the secret? Is real estate keepin' you going?

Vanilla Ice: Hey, real estate works for me. It might not work for everybody but it's, it's... I've never played the stock market. It's done great things for me over the years. It's kind of an accident that I fell into it, but I learned real simple and it was simple as a pimple, y'know? Every house that I bought, it made money when I sold it so, uh, I just learned that just let me buy a bunch of houses and sell 'em. I mean it was that simple and it sounds like there was a lot more to it, but you don't need to buy the tapes or the infomercials on TV and all that stuff to learn to buy and sell houses. You just do it and that's how you make your money. The stock market is a gamble.

Nardwuar: Vanilla Ice, do you still have the top selling rap album of all time? Is that still *To the Extreme*? Is that still you, Vanilla Ice? Do you still hold that honor?

Vanilla Ice: I don't

know. I really don't check the stats every day but I probably assume. It's been there for a long time and it'll probably stand there for a long time. It's just one of those things that I'm proud of and it's amazing and it's - I didn't expect it and what an impact, y'know?

Nardwuar: Well, congrats! I wanna give you some props. That's amazing!

Vanilla Ice: Yeah, yeah, it is amazing. I mean I never expected it, so I'm grateful for that, for sure.

And then, y'know, about eight months down the line I see this hard copy, metal jacket *Sex* book she releases and uh, y'know, just to see me and how everything was portrayed in the whole book and everything. It just kinda threw me into her slutty package. And I wasn't very happy to be a part of it. All my friends are like, "Yeah, dude!" but I had mixed emotions for it, y'know? Because I kinda felt for her at that time and to see her portrayed just full-on, sex-fiend freak, y'know, it

work with you, Vanilla Ice. Iron Maiden! What's the 7th times 70 thing? You're working with Iron Maiden?

Vanilla Ice: Isn't that hardcore, man? That's awesome, dude. They're my heroes, man. And it's just an honor, y'know. Just working with Soulfly and Slipknot and all these multi-platinum, multi-talented bands and groups and stuff is just such an honor for me. For them to respect me as a musician as well, and to honor me by being on my record with me, I couldn't be more happy.

Nardwuar: Vanilla Ice, you had some wicked hair.

Vanilla Ice: Yeah.

Nardwuar: You had some dope hair. But so did Kid Rock. Everybody had that style back then, didn't they?

Vanilla Ice: Yeah, that pompadour? Yeah, remember that? That straight up, ska ska! It's like your grandma pulling out pictures of you that you're ashamed of or embarrassed of, but I can look back at it and I can laugh now. I can laugh at myself or whatever, but at the time man, I had to live it out. I mean, from the success I hibernated for a long time because I was only sixteen when I wrote "Ice, Ice Baby." So I was ordering pizza in my house. I couldn't go out. I couldn't go shopping, couldn't do anything. Then all of a sudden I just said, "Fuck it. I'm going to face my adversity." Sorry you gotta edit that. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Whose idea was it to have the hair? Whose idea was it to shave the eyebrows? 'Cause the eyebrow shave thing was cool.

Vanilla Ice: [laughs] I shaved my eyebrows. I did that stuff and the hair. It was all for fun. It was just a joke, but it was amazing the impact it had. It's just super amazing and for it to carry over to today and for people to respect and embrace what I am doing today just means the world to me. I'm just so blessed. It's great.

Nardwuar: What's the deal between you and puppets, Vanilla Ice? Are you really afraid of puppets? What's the deal? I love puppets!

Vanilla Ice: Well, man, I've got a few hang-ups in life. I'm a little weird on certain things. I'm attention deficit disorder and puppets scare the hell out of me. I'm really scared of puppets and midgets, man. [laughs] No, no problem. I mean it's really just... I don't know what it is. It's like, y'know, a black cat crossing your path if you are superstitious. You're gonna be like, "Whoa, get this black cat," y'know what I mean, trying to stay in front of it. You're not going to walk under a ladder. Well to me, puppets are evil.



Nardwuar: Now I heard that you were necking with Corey Feldman in a hot tub at Naomi Campbell's place. Is that true, Vanilla Ice?

Vanilla Ice: C'mon, Hasselhoff, I don't get that friendly, man.

Nardwuar: Now, you were in Madonna's *Sex* book and you claim that you were in there "unknowingly." How did you "unknowingly" end up in a "sex book"?

Vanilla Ice: No, no. Don't change it around. Not unknowingly. Well, actually, you're right. [laughs] I was going out with her, okay. I was going out with her at the time and, uh, it was really crazy. I just went over there and I am always used to people taking pictures and everything and she starts taking her clothes off, which she does even with pictures or not, y'know. So she starts taking her clothes off and they start taking pictures and everything and I'm not thinking any big deal. I didn't think anything was going to come of these pictures or anything.

was pretty shocking 'cause I knew it wasn't her.

Nardwuar: Well, how do you feel right now? Because Madonna said it was a mistake to pose with Vanilla Ice. That's kinda mean.

Vanilla Ice: Naw. She says it's a mistake because I keep talking shit about her. I told her that being in her book was the biggest regret I have out of most of the stuff I have done. We didn't depart too happily. So, I don't know if there's gonna be any kind words there but I still got love for her. There's not anything going on today - all the bitterness or whatever - is fine today. We're happy today, but back in the day we went our different ways, y'know?

Nardwuar: And now there are many people who are happy to

They scare the hell outta me, man, and I don't know why. Maybe it was *Chucky*, growing up on the movie, y'know. I don't know. They scare me.

Nardwuar: Vanilla Ice, you have played so many amazing places. I was noticing, looking at your tour thing, and you're playing The Keg and you're also playing frat houses. What's the difference between playing The Keg and a frat house? What's it all like? The Keg, frat houses?

Vanilla Ice: It's cool, man. We, we hit all the towns, the big ones. We hit Calgary and then we come back to Regina and Saskatoon and even last night Chilliwack, man. We hit 'em, y'know. It doesn't matter...

Nardwuar: That's a good rap name, isn't it? Can you freestyle on "Chilliwack" for a second there, Vanilla Ice?

Vanilla Ice: [raps] Chilliwack, Chillimack, that's what it's all about. Gimme the attack, like 420 baby, that's what I'm all about. Sittin' right here, givin' the scream and shout, gonna turn it out. Unh!

Nardwuar: Yeah!

Vanilla Ice: [laughs]

Nardwuar: What was it like opening for NWA there, Vanilla Ice? Just winding up here. Opening for NWA. What was that like?

Vanilla Ice: It was kinda scary

actually 'cause I was, like I said, real young. I did the whole Stop the Violence tour and everything. And I was with Ice T and that's actually when I first got my big break – was with Ice T and them, and Stetsasonic and EPMD. But it was crazy because I didn't know about the studio gangster thing back then. I thought it was all real. Drive-bys and shootings. I was like, "Good, I'm glad that they, y'know, they're cool with me." [laughs] I didn't want them to kill me, man.

Nardwuar: Are you friends with any of the other "Ices"? Y'know, like Ice Cube, well, you just said Ice T. Are you friends with any of the "Ices"?

Vanilla Ice: Yeah totally, we're all cool. Yup. Ice T, I have been cool with since '89, man. So it's been really good. He's a good guy. Actually, I am doing some shows with him coming up soon here in the States.

Nardwuar: Now, I heard this rumor. I don't know if you want to answer it or not, but I heard a rumor. Did you go to a party put on by Naomi Campbell?

Vanilla Ice: I did, I did. Back in the day.

Nardwuar: Now I heard that you were necking with Corey Feldman in a hot tub at Naomi Campbell's place. Is that true, Vanilla Ice?

Vanilla Ice: C'mon, Hasselhoff, I don't get that friendly, man. [both Vanilla and Nardwuar laugh]

Nardwuar: Baboom.

Vanilla Ice: You're pushin' it.

Nardwuar: Vanilla Ice, I want to leave with a quote, and the quote goes, "Shit! A white boy can dance like that?" And do you know who said that, Vanilla Ice?

Vanilla Ice: Who?

Nardwuar: Chuck D.

Vanilla Ice: Nice, yeah, Chuck D.

Nardwuar: And I'm wondering, can you maybe do a couple moves for us. Just please for...

Vanilla Ice: I'll do a move called The Transformer for ya. Check it out, it's called the Transformer. This is one that I used to do back in the day. I still break dance every now and then but I've had so many motocross crashes. I broke my wrist and stuff, so I don't do many head spins anymore.

Nardwuar: So you're going to do one for us?

Vanilla Ice: I am going to do the Transformer. This is a Transformer.

Nardwuar: By Vanilla Ice!

Vanilla Ice: [growls] Yes!

Nardwuar: Ice, Ice baby.

Vanilla Ice: Yeah! [laughs]

Nardwuar: Yeah! Let's give 'em a beat, give him a beat! [Nardwuar motions to crowd in the alley behind the club waiting to talk to

Vanilla Ice]

Vanilla Ice: No, no, no. I don't need a beat, I don't need a beat, I don't need a beat, dude! Just check it out. Here we go. Ya ready? Watch it! Watch it. I'm gonna tear it up, alright?

Nardwuar: Okay, okay.

Vanilla Ice: This is The Transformer. [Vanilla Ice then magically turns his body into a rubber band!] That's The Transformer. That's it.

Nardwuar: Aw, Vanilla Ice in the house!

Vanilla Ice: [laughs] That's one of the old school moves I did in *Cool As Ice*, man. I'm surprised I still remembered that.

Nardwuar: Well, Vanilla Ice, why should people care about Vanilla Ice? Why should people care?

Vanilla Ice: Because, man, we are who we are because of who we were. And, uh, my life through the eyes of the camera and the TV is very entertaining. Enjoy it because I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy.

Nardwuar: Well, thanks very much, Vanilla Ice. Keep on rocking in the free world. And doot doola doot doo...

Vanilla Ice: Doot do. [laughs]

To hear this interview visit
<<http://www.nardwuar.com>>



Shark Bait

THEN HE NOTICED THE PILES OF HANDMADE BOOKS, THE PIZZA, THE SODA, AND A GROUP OF KIDS WHO SEEMED TO BE IN HIGH SPIRITS. HE SAID, "HEY, I WANNA TAKE THIS EXAM!"

I wore the Razorcake Fuck Off t-shirt on what I hoped would be my last day as a teacher in the classroom. Final exam day, the professor looking like a college kid in baggy thrift-store jeans, Chuck Taylors, and a t-shirt that read FUCK OFF if you creased it up like a *Mad Magazine* fold-in.

The class I'd been teaching all semester was Fiction I. It's the first fiction writing workshop that you take at the University of Redlands if you plan to major in creative writing. Instead of taking a final exam at the end of the semester, you submit a final portfolio. You include all the revisions of all the stories that you'd submitted for workshop. That's how it was always done when I was a student there. But now that I was the professor, things were going to change! Yeah! My students were going to take all their stories (which they had better damn well revise first), and they were going to make zines.

I told my students that instead of a final exam, we would have a zine party. There were fourteen students in the class, and each student needed to make enough copies of their zine for everyone else. That way, everyone would have a copy of everyone's zine. They would exchange zines and have pizza. The university would order and pay for the food.

I showed up to class, and a handful of my students were already there, piles of zines stacked in front of them. The pizza delivery guy was waiting for his money. I paid him and invited the class to dig into the food. The door opened again, and two guys nearly walked in. One said, "Whoops, wrong classroom." Then he noticed the piles of handmade books, the pizza, the soda, and a group of kids who seemed to be in high spirits. He said, "Hey, I wanna take this exam!"

Other students filtered in. In the meantime, it seemed all anyone could talk about was how they spent hours working on their zines, how much they spent

hours at Kinko's photocopying their zines, or how the guy at Kinko's said, "You know, a lot of you kids seem to be coming in here with them little books. This for a class? What's your teacher's name?"

I laughed at this. Someone in the class started talking about how much was spent on the photocopies. Someone else jumped in and said, "I spent over thirty dollars on this."

I helped myself to some pizza

black cloud over her head.

She sat down next to her friend Raquel, who sat to my left. The desks were arranged to form a large rectangle, so that everyone sat facing each other. From my position, I could clearly hear every word that Caroline hissed to Raquel. Even with the sound of the other students talking, I couldn't help picking up on Caroline's every single word.

"Can you believe it? I just spent thirty-two dollars on all these

today was the last day of class, behaving properly didn't matter anymore. With Raquel answering with guarded "Uh huhs," Caroline continued her barely concealed tirade against my class.

I tried to tune her out and focus on the other students. I wanted to talk positively about the class and what my students had gained from the sixteen weeks that we had met as a workshop. I said, "So, did you guys get anything out of this experience? I'm hoping that you were able to learn a few things."

And to my left, I heard a low mutter: "Yeah - I learned never to make a zine again."

I felt my cheeks grow hot. My heart pounded faster in my chest. I lifted my hand to sip from my Coke, and my arm trembled. None of my students seemed to notice. They said some nice things about the class, but I wasn't listening to them. Couldn't. It was like my hearing had tuned into just one channel: Caroline's bitch and moan broadcast.

"My friends are going camping next week. I was supposed to go with them, but I guess I can't now. I'm gonna have to tell them I spent all my money on these things. I am so broke. I can't believe I just spent all that money for all these copies..."

Jesus fucking Christ. I was done. I put my Coke down and gripped the edge of the table. I turned to look at Caroline and Raquel, and it took all my strength and maturity to plaster a fake smile on my face. The rest of the class got quiet. They knew something was up.

I said, "All right. I'm going to have to ask you to stop talking about that now." I tried to smile, but my face felt frozen and I'm sure I must have looked crazy. I said, "It's really starting to bother me."

What I wanted to say, what I wanted to scream was, "Quit your fucking bitching! I've had enough! Augh!"

But I think everyone knew what I meant.

I don't know what the expres-



and said, "That's why I never required you guys to buy books for this class. Remember I said that at the beginning of the semester? That all your money would be spent on photocopies?"

"Oh, I'm not complaining," one student said. "I would have spent a lot more on books for another class. This was cool."

"Yeah, I didn't mind," someone else said. "I really enjoyed doing this project."

People continued to talk and eat pizza. It seemed everyone was having a good time. Then Caroline walked in, late. She made her way to her desk, scowling the whole time. You could practically see the

copies. That's just too much. I can't believe I had to spend all my money for this class."

The last day of class, and she was at it again. For the first half of the semester, I had listened to her snide comments and pretended not to hear. Then, right before the spring vacation, I hit the breaking point. I called her into my office for a conference and said, "I noticed you have a problem with this class." She denied it and asked why I would say that. I said, "Uh, because of those rude little comments I hear you making all the time?"

After that, she seemed to restrain herself, but I guess since

sion on Caroline's face looked like. I didn't look. Wouldn't. I really, really disliked her so much at that moment that I couldn't even bring myself to hold my gaze for one-tenth of a second.

I turned and made eye contact with the others. The rest of my students looked smirky and pleased. A few of them had shit-eating grins that they barely concealed behind slices of pizza and plastic cups that they raised to their faces. I knew several of them were not fond of Caroline, either. She'd made snide comments about their writing, too. I knew they were glad I'd put her in her place.

Yeah! The last day of school! All right! The professor finally told the mean girl to shut up!

I knew I would probably never see any of them ever again. I knew Caroline needed to be told to shut up. That if I hadn't said anything, I might as well have been condoning her words and attitude. I knew that, as the adult and sole authoritative figure in the classroom, there were certain things I had to say and do.

But I didn't feel good about any of it.

The following week, I submitted my students' final grades to the Registrar's Office and I returned my keys to Public Safety. So, it's

official. I am now unemployed with no immediate job prospects.

After nearly nine years of being a professional educator, I'm ready for a career change. I don't want to become that bitter old teacher who never grades papers, who only assigns busywork and shows movies and screams at the students and marks off the years until she can retire. I know too many people like this. I have friends who have been teaching for seven, ten, fifteen, twenty years. They don't enjoy their jobs, but they continue to teach anyway because they have bills to pay. They're locked in with a mortgage, car payments, children to support, and all the trappings of suburbia.

Even though the work is sucking the soul out of them, they say, "I've put in this much time, I might as well keep going. I don't have a choice."

I take note of the two-car garage, the custom-built home, the stuff they buy to fill it, their ridiculously oversized SUVs, their fancy technological gadgets, the clothes they wear, the places they dine, the baby just born and another one on the way.

And I think, yes, you do have a choice. This is what you choose.

—Felizon Vidad





Designated Dads

I'm Against It



As seeing Ellis Island would be to history buffs, anyone seriously into rock'n'roll should come pay Joey a visit – it's just as an important a part of America history.

It's often been called the greatest city in the world from both sides – those who are native and those who have taken time to visit. And, because some of my favorite things have been traced back to this particular place, I've always wondered since I was a kid if it was to be deemed true about being the greatest city on earth. I'm talking about New York City, folks – home to bands like the Ramones, the New York Dolls, and KISS. Also, the birthplace of historical dives like CBGB and Max's Kansas City (RIP), *Saturday Night Live*, the 1979 film *The Warriors*, and the worldwide baseball legacy known as the Yankees. And let's definitely not forget what's got to be some of the greatest pizza to pass through my jabbering jowls (Tubby's gotta eat, right, Megan?).

Now, I know it seems weird, maybe even a little silly to some, that the few things I mentioned above seem miniscule in comparison to the gigantic museums and rich history that NYC has to offer. But this was my trip, and although I got to see quite a bit of history this place holds, for my first jaunt out there this past May, I finally got to see firsthand some of the things that I've wondered about for years and years. The best part of my trip out there was that I got to stay with and go see things with my sister, Julie,

who's been living in Manhattan for almost a year now. Endless thanks *must* go to her here for letting my carcass crust on the futon in her living room for almost a week and a half – my sister simply rules.

Real quick – I'd just like to offer a word of friendly advice to anyone flying out of the Long Beach Airport here in California. Seems that those in charge of running this airport haven't got the hint that, in the last six months, both airlines operating out of here have increased their flights, thus increasing the number of passengers having to go past a thorough security check. Keep in mind that there's *one* security area here, total, with two lines to pass through a pair of metal detectors and x-ray machines. Being that there were three flights departing within twenty minutes, you can obviously tell without doing any math that it's literally impossible to get everyone through security in time for their flight, no matter *how* early you check in.

I expected a muted trumpet to blare the defeating “wah-waaah” sound as I was second in line to get x-rayed when the boarding gate lady came waddling into the security area. With her stubby hands up in everyone's pissed-off faces, she announced that our flight, as well as *another* one, was closed – they

had to depart immediately or risk being heavily fined (which is a fact, by the way). Fuck. A third of the passengers and myself who got denied our flight made a mad dash back to the check-in line with hopes to get a stand-by seat on the next available flight. I almost forgot I was on vacation when I got back to the check-in area to find a very perturbed businessman (turning a very violent shade of crimson) pointing his finger at the woman behind the counter, adding, “This is a bunch of fucking *bullshit*! What kind of a fucking idiot runs his business like this!? This is *very* unprofessional! *FUCK!*!” I swear this is what he said, honest injun! Getting wind of his desperation and rage, I learned he had a very important meeting that couldn't be missed, so he bought *another* ticket from the other airline and quickly boarded his plane.

Then there was this other lady shouting and flapping her arms around like an overstuffed chicken with a frizzy, wooly perm hairdo, screeching about how she had to meet her mother *that evening*, yap-yap-yap-yap. I'm surprised she didn't start scratching and pecking on the floor by the counter, the stupid yenta. Hey lady, join our super secret club of denied passengers over here, because yelling at *anyone* besides the people who actually *run* this airport is a complete waste of time. I felt bad for the check-in counter lady as I was securing a spot on the stand-by list and tried to get her to laugh. When she finally cracked a tired grin, I said that I hoped the mob in front of her would cut her some slack and try to be a bit more human than the first two pieces of work I encountered.

Before I finally boarded the next flight (four hours later), I met and talked with Jacqueline, the lovely keyboard player from Central City Transmission, a band from out here in LA (centralcitytransmission.com). After talking about how lame it was how we missed our flight and how the airport seems to be neck-deep in their own ass, the Incredible Screeching

Hen Lady came skittering up to the small group of us who missed our plane and sat down. She then went on a yammering spree, including the “incompetence” of the airport, how many years it had been since she'd eaten McDonald's, her mother waiting in NY worrying where she was at, and her husband and her newborn kid. God, that poor husband and kid. ZIP IT, already! Then she fixated her attention on Jacqueline, unleashing a rambling stream of nonsense that made the most boorish infomercial seem interesting. Before Hen Lady could get her beak sunk into her brain, Jacqueline shooed her off in the direction of a couple of airport officials. Good work, Jacqueline, although you punching her out might have opened up another seat up on the plane for someone else, not to mention saving those who had to be seated around her noise pollution.

After landing in JFK and getting my butt quickly shuttled over to Julie's place, we made our way over a few blocks to Webster Hall where the annual birthday bash for Joey Ramone was being held that night. Since Joey passed on two years ago, Joey's mother and brother have kept the traditional celebration going, this year with The Misfits and Rocket From The Crypt headlining. Incidentally, because of my earlier missed flight, I missed Rocket From The Crypt, so all those in charge at Long Beach Airport OWE ME a Rocket show, you buttholes. Bumped into Jerry Only real quick as we made our way upstairs where all the pre-show hoopla was going on and Mr. Devil Lock is as yoked-up as ever. He's still quite a big kid. In the back dressing room, I got to talk with Marky Ramone (thanks again for the all-access stickers, Marc!) and even yakked with ex-Bad Religion drummer Bobby Shriver, who I hadn't seen for a few years. The guy is as funny as ever and has a sharp memory.

The Misfits current line-up is Jerry Only on bass/vox, Marky Ramone on drums, and Dez Cadena (!) on guitar and occasional vocals



Designated Dads

for the Black Flag segment of their set (to which they rocked "Rise Above" and "Six Pack"). The rest of the set consisted of classic Misfits tuneage and a few handfuls of Ramones gems. They even pulled out a fistful of cool covers, including revved-up versions of "This Magic Moment" and "Monster Mash." Trust me – these covers RAWKED.

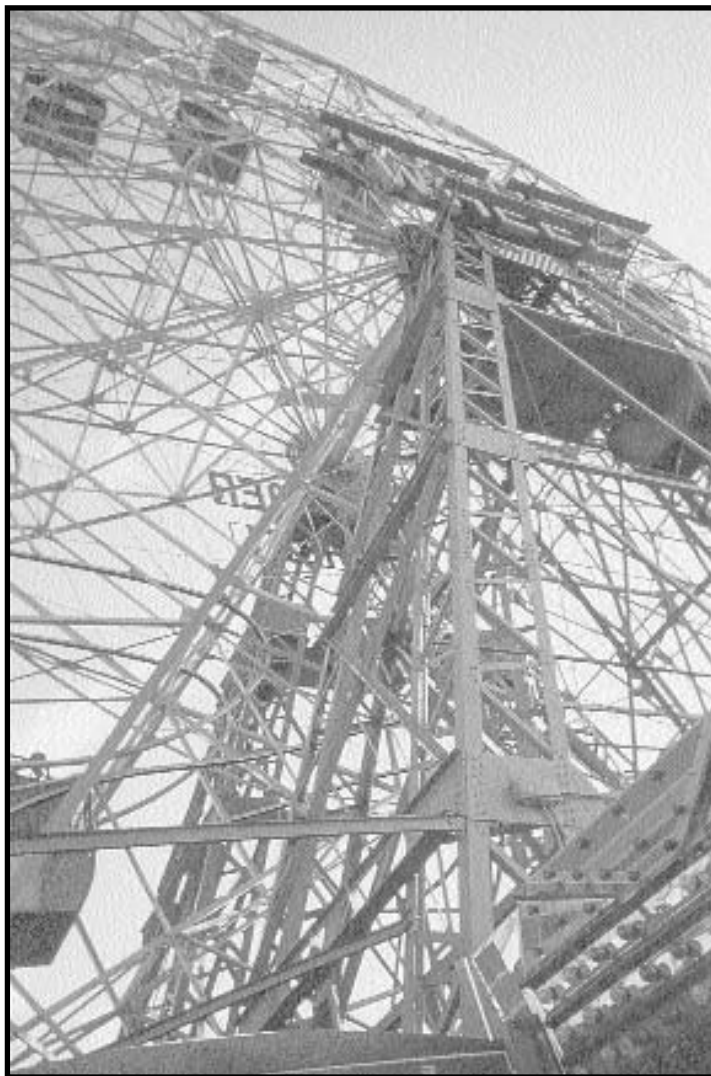
After the show, Julie, Bobby, and myself walked off in the direction of St. Marks Place, where I was to get my first addicting fix of real New York pizza at Ray's. I can honestly say, after eating what was to be many slices on my visit, that I now understand why so many East Coast folk laugh and call the pizza garbage out here in the LA area. It was absolutely godhead. They are a few good mom and pop pizza places here in LA, like Luigi's in Highland Park near Razorcake headquarters, but there's nothing like getting a fat, oven-hot slice, folding that sucker in half, going to town on it, and making a sloppy, saucy mess all over the place. (Mmmmm... sloppy, saucy mess... ahhhhhhm.)

After I popped my pizza cherry, Bobby insisted on showing us certain things around the neighborhood there, pointing out places of musical interest at two in the morning. He showed us where Arturo Vega (original Ramones graphic artist/lighting guy) still lives around the corner from CBGB and the supposed place where the first Ramones LP cover was shot (damn them if they *did* tear that wall down, Bobby!). I got my first look at Manitoba's, the bar owned by The Dictator's Handsome Dick himself, and he was cranking out beer bottles and cocktails from behind the bar as we walked in. I thought that it's so cool that Manitoba actually works his own bar alongside his other workers – when was the last time you saw Johnny Depp pouring a double bourbon at The Viper Room in LA? The walls of the place are covered in framed 8 x 10 photo prints from NYC's premier punk photographers Roberta Bayley and Stephanie Chernikowski, including shots of the Ramones, Dead Boys, Dictators, NY Dolls, Johnny Thunders, and tons more artists. The jukebox was just as equally cool, cranking out The Damned and Motorhead as we made our way through the crowds of good-timers and nabbed a corner space by the bar. Dick yelled to Bobby, quickly shook hands with him, and immediately did us up with drinks! I wanted to personally thank him and compliment his place, but he was slinging booze like crazy (if you read this, Dick, thank you!).

After Manitoba's, we went down St. Mark's Place, where Bobby started air drumming and humming Led Zeppelin's "Kashmir," and all the while he and Julie were smiling at each other like a joke I wasn't in on at all. And I wasn't. This went on for a few seconds longer and I finally got annoyed to the point where I asked Bobby, "What the hell are you doing, man?" Right at that point, he turned to me, kept air drumming with one hand and pointed his thumb behind him across the street. I didn't know what he was pointing at until my eyes caught it – the apartment building standing there just as it stood when it was photographed for the cover of Led Zeppelin's *Physical Graffiti* LP back in 1975. I was stunned to see it in all its almost-original glory. It almost felt like looking at an all too familiar movie set but, as I soon realized within my time out there, there's a lot of beautiful old architecture still standing after many decades.

Julie and Bobby also pointed out how there's been a lot of re-fac-ing of a lot of the old apartment buildings in the Bowery area, mostly for the college students. It's really unfortunate because it takes away from the area's look and feel, especially when you see newly redone white brick-fronted apartments speckled here and there like an ill-placed neon sign. Hell, even the building that CBGB is connected to is going through a re-working upstairs. I asked this one funny Jamaican guy on the demolition crew one afternoon what was going on, and he explained to me exactly what I had guessed – that the apartments were being gutted and rebuilt for the students. He even pointed out a few places across the street that his company had done demo work on – yep, the white brick numbers. He went on about how in the '70s the only thing in the surrounding area were "bums," "low-life dealer-types," and the "wild punk musicians and such" who frequented where we were standing, in front on CB's.

Getting around the city was actually a nice break from having to drive everywhere because NYC has got the transportation situation licked with its miles and miles of subway train lines, as well as the frequently running buses that go just about everywhere. Add to that the number of cabs (that *will* run you down if you don't keep an open eye while out walking), and you literally have the town at your disposal. It amazed me to see so many folks out walking during any given time of the day, something you definitely don't see out here in LA, unless you count the crowds of



Destiny's Child

people in their cars in the freeway traffic.

Once I got a bit familiar with the subway system, I was hopping and riding trains during the day while Julie was at work. Trying not to get lost, I wanted to go catch a few things that I'd always heard about, like Manny's Music, where Dee Dee and Johnny Ramone bought their very first bass and guitar upon deciding to start a band one day while on their lunch break from their jobs. One of the guys I asked this about in the guitar dept. said, "Yeah, this is the place," very monotone-like while noodling some wanky lead riff on a Les Paul. He then hung it back up on the wall and walked away from me. Sorry to disturb you, Eddie Van Failure.

Of course, I had to go find the infamous intersection that Dee Dee wrote a song about on the first Ramones record, "53rd & 3rd." I have to admit that I actually felt like a bit of a tool snapping pictures of the intersection street signs during the evening rush hour, especially with the throngs of people coming and going out of the subway station on that corner. But I have to say that one or two of the people

swarming past me knew what I was up to, 'cause they smiled a bit after they looked up at what I was taking pics of. Who cares? I'm on vacation and I'm a hopeless Ramones fan. Bite me.

At least I didn't dress up in a full Furies costume (the baseball-themed gang from the movie *The Warriors*) and run around the streets of New York in the middle of the night with a baseball bat under one arm. Then again, who knows? Maybe I can plan to go back there this Halloween. And guess what, Julie? You're running with me, so break out that ball cap and get ready to paint your face.

I made my way out to the Hotel Chelsea one afternoon to see where Dee Dee used to hole himself up to work on his songwriting over the years, as well as his autobiography, *Poison Heart*. The hotel was also the topic for his creepy fictional novel, *Chelsea Horror Hotel*. The older guy at the front desk started to smile when I asked if they still had any of Dee Dee's paintings up on their walls. "Ah, yes, Mr. Colvin... that Douglas – he was some character," he said fondly, with the look on his

face like he had to deal with Dee Dee more than a couple of times over the past years. He went on to tell me that they did have one of his paintings amongst all the others hanging in their hotel, but it had since been gone for a while. The Chelsea was also the hotel where Sid Vicious supposedly shanked Nancy Spungen dead, his then-girlfriend. There's a whole lot of culture and artistic history within this place, so if you can't get out there to see it just yet, check out their very informative website at www.hotelchelsea.com.

When I took a train out to the business/financial district part of town out near Battery Park, I finally saw just how massive the area was where the World Trade Center buildings used to be. My jaw dropped as soon as I walked into the full view of the site and actually shuddered when I began to calculate how much of a roar it must have made when the two buildings collapsed. I just couldn't believe how many yards and yards of space they used to sit on – it looked like a couple of blocks! That put it into perspective, big time. I then started thinking of the massive grave this became for all the people who didn't

get out of those buildings in time. I had simultaneous feelings of great sadness and pissed-offedness, if there is such a word. Never really felt like that before. It's kind of hard to explain.

Got to go see The Cramps sweat, wiggle, and rock the cock off of Irving Plaza Tuesday night in front of a sold-out audience. Creepy, goodtime ass-boogie was had by all, and I had no idea that The Cramps have had an old LA veteran under their wing on bass until my pal Sean informed me. Seems that Scott Franklin, the former Mau-Maus bassist, has been rumbling the four-stringed mof with The Cramps for some time now, and what a job he and the rest of the Cramps did that evening. Quite a good blast of sick fun for all!

With all the ethnic diversity strewn across this fair city, it seems as if there's always some kind of street festival going on in some part of the town. Julie confirmed my suspicions and told me that there are usually three to four going on every weekend, and the weekend I got out there, we went to a doozy of a street fest out in the Hell's Kitchen area. Food you couldn't

imagine, like gigantic, messy fruit crepes with Nutella (an Italian hazelnut/cocoa spread), numerous open-fired meats on skewers ready to be grabbed, gyros dripping with sauces, and hot sandwich stands up the wazoo. There was a dangerously overabundant supply of shacks set up to peddle scads of deep-fried tastiness to my addicted self. The Spanish/Cuban stand rocked and rolled with their sizzling turnovers, each stuffed with chicken or shredded beef and potato. Never before have I seen such grease-enriched decadence as far as my eyes would take me, with one stand sporting hot, steel bins filled with jumbo hand-dipped corn dogs, crinkle fries, full-sized onion blossoms, and battered cheese sticks sitting altogether side by side in BULK! Woo-hoo! I felt like Homer Simpson locked inside the Duff brewery or the Quik-E-Mart that afternoon, but unlike Homer, we had to pace ourselves for later consumption located at more real types of places to gorge, I mean, have dinner... ahhhhhm... uh-guh. While on the subject of eating in the street (you can tell that I like to eat, can't you? Tubby LIKE!), I have to give props to Nuts 4 Nuts, who Julie calls The Nut Man. These carts are sprinkled about the city, and what they do is take fresh, pan-fired toffee coating – right there at the cart – and dummy up the likes of cashews (oh, hello!), peanuts, almonds, and fresh chunks of coconut meat. Good lord. Can someone call Roto Rooter? My aorta feels a tad bit backed-up since I've been back.

Quick props to some damn good eateries: Katz's Deli – a Rueben sammich that will knock your Mom's dick in the dirt (I know, I know – your Mom don't have a wiener, but that's how *good* Katz's is!). Veselka – some of the most mouth-watering Ukraine food you'll ever inhale. Make a sudden movement around Tubby's veal stew, and you lose a knuckle. Paesano – one of the largest veal parmesans ever placed in front of me, and their entree-sized pasta dishes are top-notch, as well. (Hey, screw you – Julie couldn't finish it – wasting food to me is like Torrez wasting beer, right, Torrez?) Paesano's a must when over in Little Italy. Jackson Hole – anyone who lusts for the *ultimate* burger can hunt one of these establishments down in the city. Burgers that cause boners, my friends. Crif Dogs – no offense to Nathan's in Coney Island, but Crif's runs circles around them, calling 'em every name in the book while they do. Crif's is *that* good. Their Chihuahua dogs and a side order of tater tots with cheese and chili rock

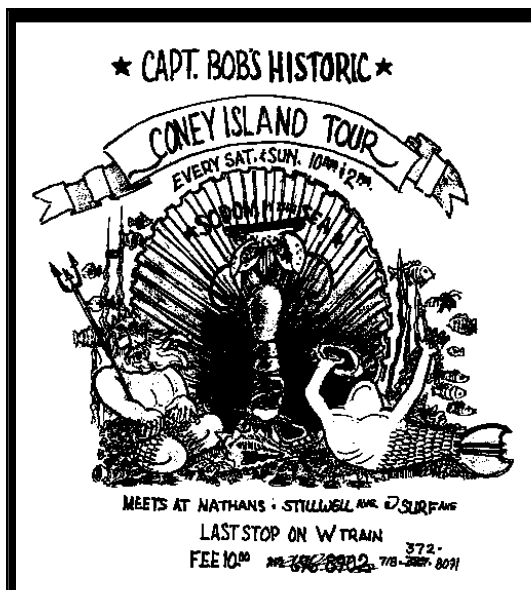
almost as hard as Motorhead. "What's a Chihuahua dog?" you ask. One of their many selections, dear reader. Go there and discover dawg bliss.

Speaking of Coney Island, we trained it out to *The Warriors*' home turf one afternoon to take in some sights and hopefully find that graffitied wall that was used in *The Warriors* promo shot behind the whole gang along the boardwalk. I figured that it was more than likely painted over, especially since that movie was filmed some twenty-four years ago, and I soon learned the wall was completely gone according to a woman who overheard my inquiry to a shop owner along the boardwalk there. I still love watching that movie after all these years it came out, and it was even cooler to see things like the Wonder Wheel and the boardwalk in person for the very first time. It almost felt as if The Rogues were going to pull up in their spray-painted hearse with Luther clacking bottles on the end of his skinny fingers, taunting the Warriors to come out and play-eee.

Julie had arranged a walking tour with Capt. Bob, a Coney local who looks like he could easily be relative to the almighty Throw Rag. If you *ever* get out to Coney Island, make sure Capt. Bob shows you around – the guy is awesome in the sense that he knows what went on around the time Coney Island was known as "Sodom by the Sea" to bible-thumpers many, many years back. He's also awesome in the fact that he makes no bones about how he speaks his mind, like how the city is neglecting parts of CI, and how some of the people who work in the amusement park are "hooligans," "cretins," and "malcontents." For instance, someone working in the arcade stuck a bottle of Bacardi inside the glass case of a 100-plus-year-old fortune-telling machine featuring a mechanical woman. Capt. Bob shook his head in disgust. When I asked him why it was in there, he said, "It's unfathomable that someone would do such a thing. I have a right mind to come back one night and take this whole machine with me!" You tell 'em, Capt. Bob!

When we made our way out toward the water on the pier, I commented that this beach and boardwalk must be jumpin' in the summertime. Capt. Bob replied, "Yes, it sure is. They even get a live animal exhibit going on right here on the sand." Julie and I looked at each other, muttering, "Cool! Caged animals on the beach! Right on!" Ol' Capt. Bob heard us and then abruptly continued sarcastically, "Yes, even as crowded as it gets, the animals insist on bringing their





blaring boombox radios, their fifteen-piece living room sets with chairs and all. Then they go and leave their things behind all over the beach – baby things... underpants..." Underpants? Julie and I looked at each other, and inside I wanted to start laughing, BAD, knowing that he meant groups of certain people instead of the beach zoo Julie and I had pictured. Grinning like an idiot and swallowing the laughter coming up from my stomach, I replied, "Baby things? Like doody-diapers, Capt. Bob?" 'cause at this point, I wanted to hear him say "doody-diapers" so I could completely cut loose with laughter. He just shook his head in disgust again as we made our way to a few of the shops along the boardwalk because he wanted to show us something.

From what he told us, Capt. Bob designed a face that adorned certain parts of Luna Park, the amusement area on the boardwalk in Coney Island, many years ago. To our discovery upon following him into these shops, he pointed out the face design silk-screened on a bunch of the Coney Island souvenir clothing, calling attention to what he called "the delightful demonic face," smiling each time he pointed to it.

Although Capt. Bob knew his game around Coney, I asked him what he knew of *The Warriors* and the graffitied wall. I was dumbfounded when he said he wasn't too familiar with it. "Sounds vaguely familiar," he said, with a puzzled look on his face. "Isn't that one of Sylvester Stallone's first films?" "No, it wasn't. It was one of Michael Beck's," I said, disappointed that Capt. Bob was out of the loop on it. Oh well. With all due respect, Capt. Bob, you best bone up on your *Warriors* knowledge. I'm pretty sure that I'm not gonna

be the last tourist to ask anything about that movie, mister. Regardless of his sometimes wacky demeanor, Capt. Bob is the man to hoof it around with there in Coney – you can meet up with him for his foot tour in front of Nathan's on the weekends at ten AM and two PM. Kick out the jams, Capt. Bob.

We tried going to The Museum of Television and Radio, only to find out that all they have there is screenings of shows, more than half you could probably catch on TV Land. No sets, no costumes, no nothing. Screenings. Screw that.

The Empire State Building is really something else. If and when you go to see it, make sure you get up there at dusk on a clear evening to see the lights come on all over the birds-eye view of the city. If Leonard should ever hang up his mic in *The Dickies*, he should move to NYC to get a part-time job in the Empire State Building. Doing what, you ask? How about wearing the "You Drive Me Ape" stage-worn gorilla mask and bungee-jumping from the top level tower onto unsuspecting visitors on the observation deck? C'mon, man, that's funny – tell me that wouldn't be great! Gorilla-masked Leonard boinging down, trying to pick vermin out of the visitors' hair, and the building could even sell little foam airplanes for visitors to throw and him to swat at, King Kong style. I know Gary would be first in line for one of those airplanes.

One thing to certainly see when in New York is Liberty Island and Ellis Island. Seeing them on television and in print for years didn't prepare me for the actual up-close look I got when we went over to see both on the ferry. The Statue of Liberty is a sight to take in when you're standing right under it, really amazing. I would've come dressed in nothing but a big fake

beard and loincloth, but it was rather cold and drizzly that particular day. Why would I wear nothing but that? So I could have run up to the bottom Lady Liberty, drop down on my knees, and pound my fists on the ground while screaming, "You did it! You really did it! You blew it all up! God damn you! God damn you all to hell!" Taylor? *Planet of the Apes*? It's a joke, people. Ellis Island is where I wish my school would've gone on a field trip, provided I went to school in the NYC area. You can easily spend a whole day at Ellis Island – sooo much to see here. They've actually preserved parts of the immigration areas and have even discovered old graffiti of new-citizens-to-be under peeled paint on some of the walls scrawled from years back. Lots and lots of artifacts to look over, and I really dug the personal items that were on display that some of the immigrants brought with them from the old world. I wish everyone could get to see this place – here's hoping they get a virtual online tour of it going soon, if they already haven't. It still wouldn't be half as amazing as seeing it all in person, though. Very impressive, to say the least.

We got the opportunity to go and pay our respects to Joey Ramone out at Hillside Cemetery in Lyndhurst, NJ one afternoon. With a path train from Manhattan and one train from Hoboken, we were there in a pretty short time. Once we arrived and started to look around, one of the groundskeepers drove up, rolled his window down, and asked if I was looking for "him," as he pointed to Joey's name on my shirt. After pointing out Joey's site for us, I thanked him and he said, smiling, "No problem, I get asked that here all the time." After we visited Joey's spot for a little while, some Irish gentleman

walked up, introduced himself to Julie and me, and asked if we knew Joey. He was amazed by how many people came by all the time and explained that he never really knew who he was or what Joey and his band had done in the music world until he "ended up here," he said, looking around the cemetery. He was telling us of a group of Germans who were there a week or two before and how people from all over came to visit his spot in the cemetery. The old man was some character, and I chuckled inside when he mispronounced CBGB "heebeegeebee." Even though I knew Joey was probably laughing, too. As seeing Ellis Island would be to history buffs, anyone seriously into rock'n'roll should come pay Joey a visit – it's just as an important part of America history.

On my flight back, I got the pleasure of meeting *Saturday Night Live* cast member Jeff Richards. You might best remember Jeff from his character "Drunk Girl," who he unleashed on SNL viewers across America during his first season on the show. Jeff was quite the personable and funny guy, something I wouldn't usually expect from someone on a high-level show like SNL. He's also definitely *not* one of them Hollyweird phonies with a stick up his ass, either, like his SNL alumnus Chevy Chase. Seems like a class act, this guy. Catch Jeff on the comedy circuit, as he's pretty much doing stand-up when not working on the show (www.tastyj-egg.com).

That's it for this two-month's worth, Razorcakers – I'm outta here. To quote that nonsensical narcoleptic Abe Simpson: "Call me mint jelly, 'cause I'm on the lamb!"

I'm Against It
–Designated Dale

DesignatedDale@aol.com

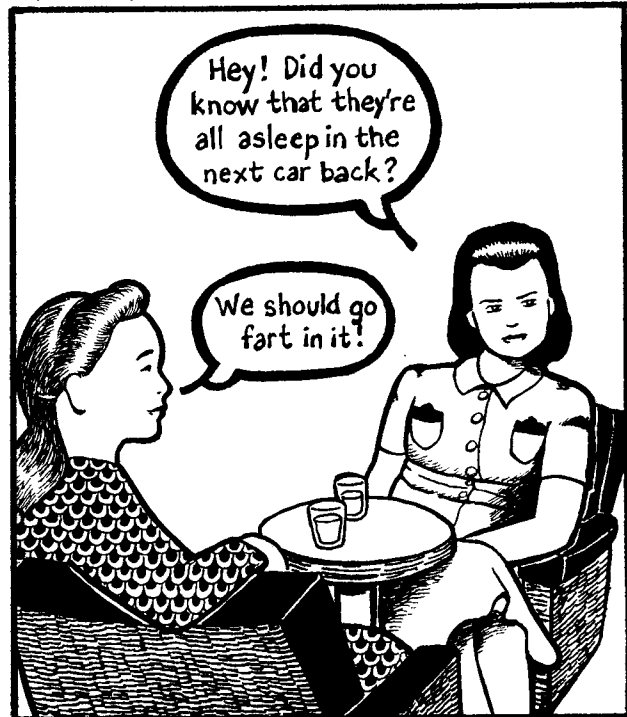


FUCKING COMICAL-BOOK FUN PARTY!

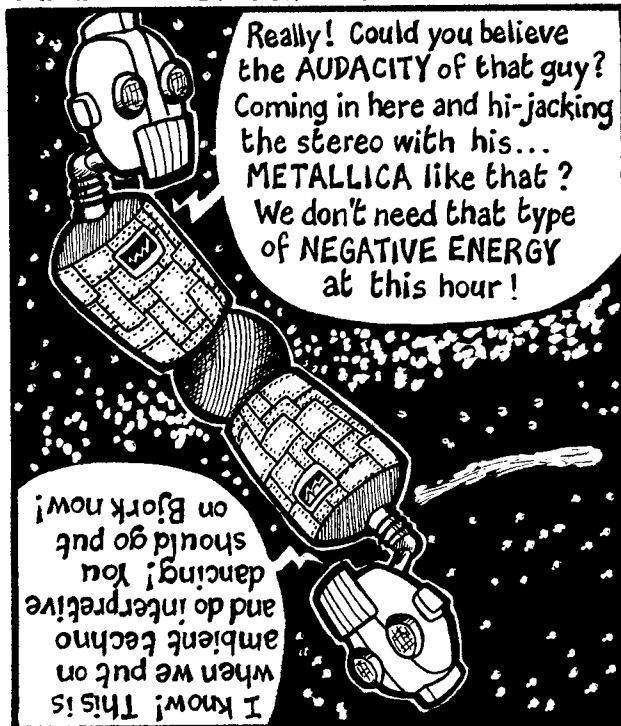
OVERHEARD IN BOSTON



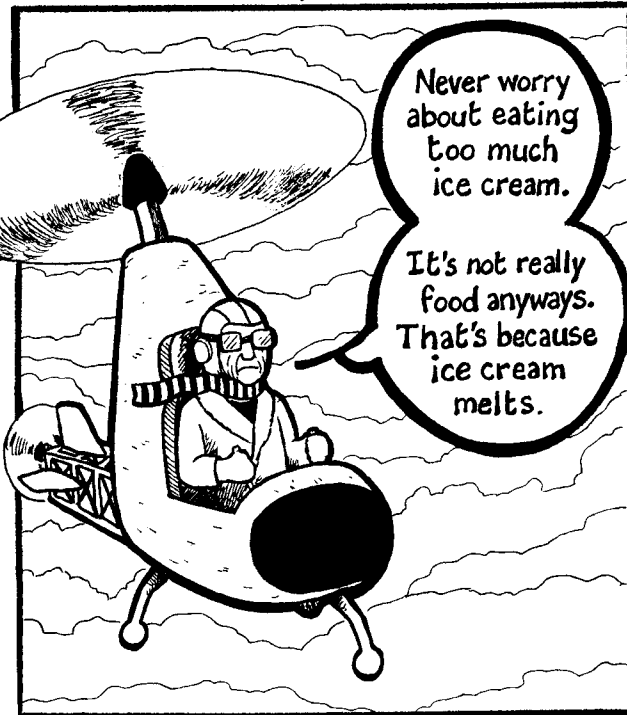
OVERHEARD ON A TRAIN THROUGH NORTHERN ONTARIO



OVERHEARD AT THE HIPSTER HOUSE PARTY AT 4 AM



AND GRANDPA ALWAYS TOLD ME...



shawn granton ★ tfr industries, portland, ore ★ may 2003

It is, how you say, funny.

THE

KNOCKOUT PILLS

PHOTOS BY TODD TAYLOR

INTERVIEW BY SEAN CARSWELL

The Knockout Pills are a Tucson supergroup, born from the members of other great bands like the Weird Lovemakers, Los Federales, and the Resonars. But keep in mind that being a Tucson supergroup is a lot like being the best surfer in Tennessee – any way you look at it, there are no stars in Tucson and there's no ocean in Tennessee. Still, you've probably heard about those kids who hunt down a mountain stream and follow it until it turns into a whitewater rapid, and they find that one spot in the rapids where the water twists and turns into a perfect standing wave, then paddle out a dinged up, garage-sale surfboard and learn to shred with what they've got. That's who the Knockout Pills are. They've found something beautiful in the twists and turns of the rock'n'roll rapids. They've stepped out onto the battered barroom stages with their dinged up guitars, their garage-sale amps, and their three-piece drum set, and they've learned to tear up what you thought you knew about punk and rock'n'roll. Their debut album has just been released on Dead Beat records, and their debut interview in *Razorcake* is about to start right now.

The Knockout Pills are:

Matt Rendon: vocals and guitar

Travis Spillers: vocals and bass

Jason Willis: guitar

Gerard Schumacher: drums

Sean: Matt, tell me about the last time you had problems containing yourself.

Matt: The first couple of weeks in seventh grade in junior high, you know how kids are always making up myths? "Oh, if eighth graders catch you in the bathroom, man, they're going to give you a swirlie or they're going to beat you up." And I believed it. I was a year ahead, so I was eleven. I was terrified. I had lunch. It was pigs in a blanket or something that goes right through you. I had science class fourth period. I go in and I begin to feel it brew there. It was the first time I had to take a dump in school. So, I get excused, and I go to the bathroom and it's one of those bathrooms that looks like a boot camp bathroom. It's got four urinals, three toilets, no walls. I'm just, like, "Fuck." So I go over there and I take my pants down and you start hearing voices, you know, but you're not hearing voices, but voices in your head of eighth graders roaming around and footsteps, so I was, like, "I got it. I'll take a shit in the nurse's



office. It's right down the hallway. No problem." So, I go scooting down there and about half way down, it was just one of those things. I had my knees together, trying desperately to get down to the nurse's office and I took a shit, right there, in my pants. And I finally got down to the nurse's office. Smelled up the place. And she had this look on her face: horror and repulsion and I could see she was a little chuckled by it. So I had to go in there, take my pants off, and we had to call my sister to come and get me. They put my

crappy underwear and pants in a bag and sent me on my way.

Sean: Did they bring you a pair of pants?

Matt: Yeah, my sister brought me a pair of sweats. And I was excused. I could go home.

Sean: No psychiatric evaluation when you were sitting there?

Matt: None whatsoever, except, "Don't shit your pants." I was scared – initiation and all that stuff.

Sean: Jason, what happened to the Weird Lovemakers?

Jason: The bass player moved to San Francisco. He's got another band going. We decided that the Weird Lovemakers wasn't a band to have different members. We were together for a long time and still like each other. (The bass player's name is Hector. He's now in the Radio Reelers.)



Matt: Also, didn't Greg (Petix, the singer/guitarist for the Weird Lovemakers) accomplish his goal of getting a girlfriend?

Jason: It's true. Greg had the band and, for a long time, he put a lot of energy into it, and then the girl happened, and all the energy is elsewhere. I'm sure the world is a better place for it.

Sean: Travis, what happened to Los Federales?

Travis: Hector left town and took everybody with him [laughs].

Joel, our singer, moved to Oakland. Initially, we'd all planned on moving up there together, but things happen. The band ran its course. We had a lot of fun with it and quit while we were ahead.

Sean: What about all of your old bands, Matt?

Matt: Well, the last band I was in, the Vultures, just broke up. We went on a tour and broke up in Texas. We got into a big argument and that was it.

Sean: How'd you get home?

Matt: It was my van. One of the other guys took a flight home and the other three of us drove back.

Sean: What was the argument over?

Matt: My buddy Matt and Heath from the Fells were both used to being the main songwriters in the group. When they got together, it didn't pan out. That was it.

Jason: You never wrote any songs in that band, did you?

Matt: No, I didn't write anything. I just played the drums and shut my mouth.

Jason: But the Resonars are still going. That's Matt's other project.

Matt: ~~It's not a band, anything. We're not performing any p.~~

Travis: I COULDN'T HELP BUT JERK OFF

Sean: ~~up?~~

Matt: THREE TIMES. OF COURSE, IT and Stu

MIGHT'VE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH

Jason THE EIGHT-INCH CARROT I HAD

Travis: ~~Stu will probably deny that.~~

Jason: I actual SHOVED UP MY ASS. that Matt wrote. I thought we'd just be the backing band because he does all the stuff in the Resonars. I assumed he had a big backlog of songs and just wanted some guys to play behind him.

Matt: But I wanted it to be a band, which is what it is.

Travis: I thought it was going to be a straight pop band. That's something I wanted to do for a while. I wanted to play some gushy-gushy, meaningless tripe.

Jason: [kidding] You know, like Matt does with the Resonars.

Travis: It didn't have anything to do with Matt. I just thought that's what the plan was.

Jason: And, plus, in Tucson, there's not a whole lot to do. After the Weird Lovemakers, I had a year of doing nothing. I was thinking, this is great. I've got nothing to take up my time. It felt good. I spent that year learning graphic design stuff. But it gets dull after a while. Eventually, something like this had to happen.

Sean: When you guys go to shows in Tucson, are you the oldest guys there?

Jason: No, Bob Spasm is the oldest.

Travis: Floyd and Bob Spasm are the oldest dudes.

Jason: I think the people at shows in Tucson, in general, are our age and down to about five years younger.

Travis: There's a whole other all ages scene that doesn't involve us at all. It's weird. I've never been in a band that the kids have liked. Even when I was a kid.

Jason: The youngest kids I see coming to our shows are the Okmoniks. They all just turned twenty-one. And they bring their pals. And a lot of kids come up from Nogales for shows.

Sean: Why is it that there are so many good bands in Tucson, but whenever I'm in there, there's nothing going on?

Travis: The whole next year, it's gonna be a thriving community. It's gonna be great. That's a personal fucking guarantee. Between the bands that are happening now and the people moving to that area. They all seem to be people who are gonna contribute. Now we have three all ages venues. There's a bunch of bars having shows. We have great bands coming up like Shark Pants and Hobart.

Jason: People will come to Tucson to visit and, if there's something happening, it seems like a fun town. A lot of people end up staying or moving there. At least three people I can think of off the top of

my head will say, "Yeah, I came because of this great party and had a great time and decided to move here, then nothing happened for three weeks. Then it was really great that one other night. Then nothing." So there are spurts. The bands are doing it for each other. We have a small community playing for each other, and there is a lot of good stuff coming out of Tucson right now.

Sean: Travis, why do they call you the Archie Bunker of punk rock?

Travis: Who calls me that?

Sean: Me.

Travis: Because I look like Archie Bunker?

Jason: You look more like Meathead.

Sean: Jason, what's the story with the letters to porn stars?

Jason: I do graphic design for a bunch of porn web sites. I've done that at a couple of different places. The last place I worked, before the place where I work now, bought a couple of web sites from two porn stars. And that company's whole thing was big-busted women. When we bought the web site, we got a bunch of other stuff with it. They were selling mouse pads and underwear on the sites.

Travis: Was the underwear used?

Jason: Yeah. And it was days-of-the-week underwear. Soiled. I'm making that up. In addition, we had several bags of unopened letters that had been sent to these gals. So I took those letters, since obviously the girls didn't want them. I opened them all and they're fucking amazing. It's letter after letter sent to these women, a lot from prison, some from fans. People sent in photos, mix tapes, all kinds

of stuff. It's a weird glimpse into the male psyche that you don't normally see. It's naked and unfettered. The logic behind these guys is so great. It's like, "I like her. I'm gonna write to her. She's gonna write me back, and we're gonna hook up." There are letters that say things like, "When you're in town, look me up. Here's a photo of me naked. These are my measurements." Some of them are fairly graphic fantasies.

THE POLICE SPOKESMAN EVEN SAID,
"HE ONLY GOT A THREE FROM RON
JEREMY. THAT LOOKED PRETTY BAD
FOR THE DEPARTMENT."

Sean: Do you remember any in particular?

Jason: I remember one where the guy seemed pretty normal. He said things like, "I'm a fan. I think you're great. When I saw this layout of you in whatever magazine, I couldn't help but jerk off three times. Of course, it might've had something to do with the eight-inch carrot I had shoved up my ass." I'm thinking, thanks for the visual. Sure, of course, the eight-inch carrot. There were some others that were pretty great, too. This one guy wrote out a long, detailed fantasy about what would happen with him and her, then this other chick would stop by and watch for a while until she couldn't help but join in. Another guy had won the lottery. One had the biggest cock in the world. One was a fireman who saves lives all the time. It was clear these were all prisoners. I've got a whole bunch of these. I want to compile them and publish them. Or do a project where I had people read them and talk about them. Time after time, people read them and it starts out kinda funny. Then, this misery sets in. After you've read seven or eight, you're just like, fucking hell, everything's wrong. Then, it comes back around and you're like, this is funny and these guys do suck.

Sean: What about the naked magician?

Jason: That was a separate one. The people who provided a lot of the content at the porn place where I was working would get a lot of submissions. People would send in letters saying, "I think I've got what it takes." Actually, the place I'm working now has a lot of that, too. People writing in saying, "I could do this. I'd be a great porn star." This one guy wrote in. He was a magician at a children's parties. He sent in naked photos of himself pulling a rabbit out of a hat. He had a the porn name "Mirage." The dream is there for so many of these guys.

Sean: What was the web site you were working on where they were auditioning guys to be porn stars?

Jason: Porn Stud Search. That's a new, kinda reality site that we have at the place where I work. It's legit. This woman in Florida named Simone goes out with different models who she hires to do the job. They go out, pick up guys – they really do pick up random guys – and proposition them. They ask them, "Have you ever thought of being a porn star? Do you think you have what it takes?" Then, they take the guys back to the hotel room. Or sometimes they do it in public. And they see if the guys can keep it up. Every guy who watches porn claims they could. They're like, "That guy's not even hard. If I was with that chick..." When they're seventeen, most males have entertained the notion of being a porn star at some point. Simone plays on that a lot. She really fucks with those guys along these lines. And she lays it on pretty thick. In the porn industry, typically the women get to pick which guys they work with. If guys don't do a good job, if they're just assholes, they don't get much work. So Simone lays it on pretty thick that the guys have to pleasure the woman. It's pretty great to see that a lot of these guys can't pull it off. They come too soon or can't come or can't get it up. At the end, they're rated by both the women. And we have stock footage of Ron Jeremy rating guys. They edit that in where it's appropriate. Recently, there was a cop who they picked up at a beer



fest. He was saying, "I think I could do this. I'd be pretty good at it." When they got him back to the room, they asked him what he did. He said that he worked for the city. When he went into another room, the girls went through his shit and found his police office ID. She raised it up to the camera and said, "We got a cop." We used that footage in the trailer. Within one day, the FBI contacted us. We had to pull it off the site. The guy was fired. And he didn't do the job in the porn. I think that, if he'd done a good job, he probably wouldn't have gotten fired. The police spokesman even said, "He only got a three from Ron Jeremy. That looked pretty bad for the department."

Sean: We probably shouldn't just talk about porn. We should talk about the band. Travis, the Knockout Pills are different than Los Federales. Los Federales fucked around a lot more live. Was this a difficult adjustment for you to make?

Travis: It's a pretty big adjustment. I still goof around quite a bit. I'm used to drooling a lot. That still happens. But it's awkward because I'm used to being a spazz, and it's terrible when you consciously try to not be a spazz. It takes a lot of the fun out of it. It makes you five billion times more conscious of yourself. I try to pick out my moves beforehand in the mirror. It's like in *Boogie Nights*, when he's trying to get it up in front of the mirror. I'll do that for a while. Then I'll work on my karate chops. So yes, it is. It's weird. And, I sing in this band. I sang a song or two in Los Federales, but it was pretty much background. Joel, the singer from the Feds, and I had a good, healthy banter that we slapped against each other all the time. It was easier then for me to hide behind the guitar when I didn't have anything funny to say. Which was most of the time.

Jason: There's no healthy banter in this band.

Travis: No, there's not. It's not a terrible thing. It's just awkward because I'm used to banter, so I overcompensate. I'm always like, "All right, here's something funny," and it's not fucking funny.

Sean: You don't talk much between songs at all, do you Matt?

Matt: No. I've been mainly a drummer in the bands I've been in. So playing guitar and singing, I'm not used to it. It feels weird. I'm used to being in the back. When you're drumming, you can do anything you want.

Sean: What's the song "It's Not True" about?

Travis: It's about pretty uncomfortable feelings. It's about being in a situation where, um, um... You know what, I can't talk about it. I can talk about it off the record. But, if I answered this question, I'd be in some serious shit. It's not about anything deep at all. Matt's songs are about something deep.

Sean: You work at Toxic Ranch Records, right? What's the history behind it?

Travis: Bill owns the record store. It's the only thing going in Tucson. We've had a few different punk rock record stores in Tucson and Toxic Ranch has lasted the longest.

Jason: He's had record stores in Pomona and New Orleans, but he's been in Tucson the longest.

Travis: He was stalking Lee Marvin and had to leave town. That's why he moved to Tucson.

Sean: Really?

Travis: No. It's a cool little shop. It's strange. The kids who go in there don't buy music. They buy shirts. A couple of the cool kids buy records. Most kids only buy pins and shirts, then go to the chain store to buy music. They'll buy their US Bombs back patch, then go to the mall and buy a Blink 182 CD. If it wasn't for Bill doing mail order, he'd have a hard time. He also works a full time job for an airline. He does a tremendous favor for Tucson because he loves it. There'd be a big void if he wasn't there.

Sean: Jason, you grew up in a small town in Kansas, right?

Jason: Pretty small. It was a college town. Lawrence, Kansas.

Sean: What was it like being a punk rock kid in Lawrence?

Jason: Lawrence actually had a good little scene because of where



it was and because of the college. There was a good college radio station that played a lot of stuff. It was all pre-MTV. There was a healthy number of bands that cropped up from 1977 on. The three biggest were probably the Embarrassment, the Mortal Micronotz, and Get Smart. They were the three bands in the early eighties that played around a lot. There was a label there that released a bunch of records. So there was a foothold. When bands toured through that part of the country, there weren't that many places to play. There was St. Louis. But even Kansas City didn't have a lot of venues. A lot of bands would play in Lawrence. There were also a couple of good record stores. So I actually had access to a lot of stuff. For being in the middle of Kansas, it's a pretty liberal-minded town. I had a mohawk and bleached hair when I was thirteen, fourteen. I didn't catch too much shit for it. I was called Devo a lot, but I was a big Devo fan, so it didn't really matter. It was kinda weird, just because there was that isolation. But I had a lot of good friends who were into it, and the turnout at shows was always pretty high. There weren't a lot of bands that got produced after the Micronotz and the Embarrassment. A lot of bands would start there but they wouldn't make it out of town. But when I was a kid, I subscribed to *MRR* and I did a lot of mail order. I saw Black Flag as a kid. I started going to shows in '82, '83. I was the youngest person in the scene, at that time. There was still a wide range of people going to the shows. William Burroughs also lived in Lawrence. He had a connection to

the punk scene in that he wrote some lyrics for the Mortal Micronotz. And the guy who ran Fresh Sounds Records, Bill Rich, worked for Burroughs as a personal secretary. A lot of times, bands or luminaries would come through town to hang out and do shit with Burroughs. That seemed to pull in some bigger bands. Minor Threat came through. Hüsker Dü. The Freeze. It was actually a good place to grow up and listen to music.

Sean: Why do you still live and play in Tucson?

Travis: It's a great place to be based out of. The rent's cheap. Easy living. It's very laid back, which is a drawback, too. You have a tendency to be stagnant because it's very laid back. But it's cool because we get to hook up bands that come through town. So, when we take off on tour, we can hook up with those bands, too. There are lots of freaks there, too, which is cool. There's a good share of unique, crazy people there who do creative stuff.

Jason: And not just punk rockers. Tucson is really fond of the weirdo shop owner or the freaky dude who owns a bar and is a complete nut. People are like, "Yeah, yeah, we're going there. If he brands you, you get drinks for ten percent off." It's full of places like that. "This guy's completely drunk all the time. If you go into his bookstore and don't buy something, he'll yell at you. It's great."

Travis: The Mad Hatter. Yeah. He just changed locations. I drove by there the other day and I'm like, "Yeah, he's still alive!"

Jason: There are a lot of people like that in Tucson, and there seems to be a big enthusiasm for them. There was a dude always riding his bike around town with his shirt off. We had different names for him.

Travis: There's umbrella man, too. There's an old hippie I met at my girlfriend's parents' party. He's like, "I'm Solar Dave. I want you to try some water." He purifies water from the sun. He's like, "Here's two cups of water." I try one, then try the other. I say, "This one's better." And he says, "You're a vegan. You don't smoke, blah, blah, blah." I say, "I smoke. I eat meat all the time, and I'm a drinker." And he says, "But you still knew the difference! That's incredible!" You run into people like that all the time.

Jason: And they're all kind of non-threatening. Tucson seems to like these people. That's something pretty great. The town is all half-ass, too. It's like, "Oh, we're painting this mural." Eight months later, you have three sketches and maybe someone got tired

of doing it. There are all these grand ideas that never come about.

Travis: It works that way with the city government, too. They can't get anything done. The traffic is really bad there, and they'll never get a freeway system. They debated it for so long that now it's impossible to do. You can travel two miles and it'll take you a half hour.

Jason: For a long time, they had a problem with people in the medians selling newspapers. They didn't want the people getting hit by cars.

Travis: But they weren't getting hit by cars.

Jason: That was the alleged reason for wanting to get rid of these people. Whatever. The solution the city government came up with is, we won't get rid of them. We'll just make them wear orange vests. So now there are these guys hanging out in the medians with a city-sanctioned orange vests and signs saying, "Will Work for Beer," or "Why Lie? I Need a Beer." It's great. Tucson has a lot of character. That's one of the reasons I honestly moved there. I didn't know any bands from Tucson, and I figured it would have a cool, weird, inbred scene. And it does. There's never been much exposure. Bands stay isolated. They all develop their individual styles and have gotten fairly far along in these styles because no one paid attention to them, anyway.

Travis: There's a ton of bands there, and not all of them are clone bands. They don't give a fuck. They're there to have fun and make music.

Jason: Like the Swing Ding Amigos. They don't sound like anyone. They don't even sound like the bands they were trying to sound like. Same with the Blacks. I could name a ton of bands like that.

I TRY TO PICK OUT MY MOVES

BEFOREHAND IN THE MIRROR... I'LL

DO THAT FOR A WHILE. THEN I'LL

WORK ON MY KARATE CHOPS.



If you could go into the mind of John E. Miner (AKA John The Minor) for a day, I don't think you come back quite the same. John's the kind of guy who never stops thinking about his art and what he can do to make something, anything, bigger and better. He's tall, lanky and after a couple beers, he can be a real animal. Some of his main influences are Wendy O. Williams and Sky Saxon of the Seeds, which would be a good explanation as to why he smokes pot before he goes nuts on a TV. (I've never seen him do that but you get the idea.) The funnier thing is that a line of coke will leave him sleeping like a baby... go figure.

That's the thing about John, he's not your run of the mill, wine drinking, pretentious artist. He doesn't spend his time locked in his studio working on a masterpiece. He doesn't even have a studio. John's work comes from the inspiration he gets from when he's out around Los Angeles. He picks up on the scene's climate and slaps it on a 11 x 14" piece of paper. John makes an effort to know the bands he does posters or album covers for; he's not just a hired gun putting out posters for his own personal gain. He gets his kicks the same way most of us do by boozing, playing in bands, and working at a job he actually enjoys (that may not apply to all of us). Slouched and seemingly shy, if you were to talk to him, you'd find he's actually really friendly. He'll probably end up chewing your ear off. Then, no less than five minutes later, you might see him rolling around on the dancefloor with his girlfriend, Olivia. Bust out the water hose, if you know what I mean.

Likewise, John's other personality comes out when he's on stage with The Party Band. Any given show can be like a carnival ride, scary and nauseating but so much fun! Some would argue that real artwork takes more dedication and effort than John puts into it but there's something to his, what may seem like, hurried pieces. Unlike most art, you don't have to search for deeper meaning or for it to unlock some secret mystery of civilization; it's pop art and it's meant to entertain your eye. He's been in the LA punk scene a lot longer than most might think and has been a participating member of the punk scene since the mid-'90s. John's a perfect example of what time it is when it comes to participating in a culture that needs more people like him, who care about what it produces in terms of good artwork, and a need for more people to stay involved and dedicated to seeing the punk scene grow. Thanks, John.



POSTER ARTIST
JOHN E. MINER

INTERVIEW BY PETITE PAQUET
PHOTOS BY TODD

Petite: You grew up where?

John: Oh, in San Gabriel Valley in the Temple City/El Monte area.

Petite: What kind of art did you start out doing?

John: The first art I started out doing was collage art. My main motivation behind that was making these little postcards to send to girls who I would meet through the personal ads in the back of *Flipside* or *Maximum Rock'n'Roll*. I'd make these little collages and put a lot of work into them, slap on a stamp, a little note, and send it to some girl who sounded cute on paper. From there it was high school graphic arts class. The graphic arts class at Arroyo High School in El Monte was a dumping ground for cholos. The teachers who taught (the class) saw that I was interested and let me do whatever I wanted. The first thing I ever started doing was my own one-of-a-kind punk t-shirts. A lot of them, I would just get old photos and stick on vinyl lettering. From there I did my first art silk screen print when I was fifteen or sixteen. That was just a weird thing. I hadn't done any band posters yet. I didn't know any bands that I thought were worth doing a poster for 'cause, you know, you didn't make posters for backyard punk parties in El Monte. When I was still in high school I did some flyer designs for backyard parties and for U.X.A. That was that phase. There was no real place to go from there in El Monte.

Petite: When did you start doing posters for bands?

John: It was in early 1995. I enrolled in a silk screening class at Pasadena City College. The girl who sat next to me was Liz McGrath. She's now actually a pretty well known artist and had this punk band called Tongue. The first week of school, she was sitting there during the lecture, drawing this really intricate flyer. Just seeing her draw this flyer and put so much effort into it really inspired me to do something. I really got to know Liz and I saw her band and told her I wanted to do a silk screen poster for her band. I was really into them and the whole idea of adding color to one moment in time really appealed to me. I did my first poster for Tongue and I did a lot of other posters. They would open up for bands like Dickies and Fear. It would basically be a Dickies or Fear poster and Tongue would hook me up with that.

Petite: Tell me a little bit about the bands you've been in.

John: I started playing in a band around the same time I started doing art for bands. It's sort of like the story of Attila the punk rock haircutter. She used to cut all the LA punk rocker's hair and pretty soon

she had her own album out. The first band I was in was called Los Mongos. We thought it was being experimental and punk rock but it was just banging on trash cans, dressing in drag and throwing blood and guts at the audience. I was also in a band called Noise in Motion. That was truly experimental. I would just get as drunk as

possible and hurt myself screaming and yelling. It was totally improv. I was also in the blues punk band called the Shakedown and now I'm playing in a band called the Party Band.

Petite: How has playing in bands influenced your art?

John: Well, it's always been trying to marry the image with the bands that are on the bill. I've seen some posters where you look at it and you know the artist hasn't even heard the bands. It's just a product. I'm really into it. I don't do posters for bands I don't like. In turn, the bands I do stuff for give me open creative control and I'm really thankful to them for that.

Petite: What are your ethics in terms of bigger scheme things or what some people call selling out?

John: The last thing I did was a poster for the Inland Invasion. That's not a big label thing but it was a big show, and Joe from the Vandals let me pretty much do what I wanted. Another thing I did was for a band named Clinic. They're from England and managed and produced by Universal Records. That was a big company. They sent me some artwork and I worked with it and created a poster. I swear though, if I could come up with one simple icon or logo and make a living on it, I don't care. This talk about selling out – if I just constantly didn't make money, are my brothers in the scene going to pay my rent?

Petite: Tell me a little bit about how you'd go about composing a poster or piece. What kind of thought process goes into before you actually make it?

John: I usually cut out images of old books and magazines, sometimes from religious propaganda. I don't keep them in a folder. I'm not organized. I may just tape it up on the wall or leave it on the table for a month. When the right lineup or show comes up I sit down to compose it. I use very little computer work in my stuff just because I'm still learning how to use a computer. What I do first is I get the image then I build the type around it. At that point I'm still thinking in black and white. It's pretty funny when I show (the original artwork) to people 'cause it's really small compared to how big it will be in the poster. In commercial art classes they'll always teach you that if you're doing something small it's always better to make it bigger and if it's big, do it full size. I never took any art classes. All the classes I took were graphic arts classes. We used things like process cameras that you could take your little tiny art work and blow it up a hundred times. That's the core basis of my work; it's very organic. When I use the computer, all I do is type out the club address and the info, print it out, cut it out and paste to my board, and then shoot it on a manual process camera. It's real archaic technology. You probably won't even be able to buy film for manual process cameras in about five years. That's why I'm slowly moving ahead. I hand color separate everything with rubylith, which is a red





film that blocks light. It's red, so when it overlaps all it is different shades of red. As far as the real color part, that doesn't come until I have the screen clamped in. I go to my ink cabinet and pick the first color that comes to my mind. I never even think of color before that point.

Petite: How do you feel about how technology's advancements are effecting your method of printmaking?

John: You ever use a process camera? If you went to an equipment dealer who sold printing equipment and said you wanted a process camera he'd say, "Come down and take your pick." They give them away. You can take the image setter film to it. Nowadays, we're having a lot of problems with different film because one line we were using just shut down and the new one is hypersensitive and almost doesn't even work with our camera.

Petite: Does it bother you that some day someone will be able to produce prints similar to what you're doing but will require very little skill in terms of manual processes and techniques?

John: Not really. It almost takes a person who's as skilled on the computer the same amount of time as someone skilled with the manual processes. It's not even the case that you can do this on the computer and bang something out in five minutes. If you compare what I do to an old artist from the sixties or something, the level of skill you had to have by doing things manually back then was phenomenal. In the old days, all the steps it would take to convert a line of type to an outline was a really complicated process of sandwiching together positives and negatives. I'm glad I can just type a font on a computer and with one click make it an outline. I don't regret not having to make a positive then a slightly smaller negative, sandwich them together, then contact them just to get a piece of film. Sure, with computers everyone can be an artist, but the end result shows what you know and if you're good. I'm slowly trying to go into that realm myself. I don't think it mocks what I do. I think what I'm doing mocks what real graphic artists did before me.

Petite: When was it that you first noticed that people were starting to recognize your work? You can actually sell your work. I couldn't make a flyer and get someone to buy it. What sets you apart from others that people want you to make posters for their shows?

John: I think it's just the rough style, the organic process. I'll hand ink color separations and the basis is just cut and paste. I've been doing it so long I've built a reputation. It's word of mouth. I've never advertised. I don't carry a business card that says, "I make concert posters. Call me." When I was a teenager, I met Ed Colver and as well known as he was then and is now, he told me he's never advertised. Yet, he's got this huge reputation. As far as people recognizing me, that wasn't

until last year. I think when you're young, the whole thought behind it is, people think, "I'm not gonna invest in this guy 'cause he's young. Who knows? Six months from now he may be working at the post office."

Petite: What is your observation of how the scene has changed from when you started out and got involved and how it is now? What was it like when you were younger?

John: Well, it wasn't that long ago. It was the early '90s. One of the reasons I started doing what I was doing was because I never saw a silk screen concert poster until I saw Frank Kozik's stuff. I forget where it was but I actually saw one being used to promote. Which, now, you'll never see his stuff promoting anything. It goes straight to market. Flyer art was so hideous in the early '90s! It just sucked! It had whatever trendy-ass political anarcho-crap was popular at the time just slapped on it. The flyer art was really hurting. I didn't think I'd ever be able to play in a band so I drifted towards art. The scene was more hardcore and politically oriented, especially in the early '90s. You'd have a bunch of idiots (on stage) just babbling about what was happening in Chiapas or whatever. It was like, okay, you're playing a small gig in East LA. You're not exactly taking this information to anyone new. They were preaching to the choir and it made me sick. These people didn't know what they were talking about. A lot of these bands I'd go see, they'd start off a song like, "This is an anti-nazi song for the people of Chiapas!" They were just speaking uneducated. The whole thing about it was, like, are these people going to Chiapas to fight? The whole anti-nazi thing was, like, any idiot knows that nazis aren't cool and not to be one. They're doing an anti-nazi song and you look around and it's like, okay there's no nazis here and I don't think anyone here was considering being a nazi." It was just meaningless, mindless political jabbering. So when I joined Los Mongos, our whole idea was that we weren't political, we were just stupid. We couldn't play and we set out to do something about what annoyed us. I only did a couple posters for Los Mongos. The second poster I ever did was for Bikini Kill. That's what really got me into it because the response was so great. They sold out within a matter of minutes. It made us so happy.

Petite: What about now, what are things like now?

John: I think art has gotten quite good. I see a lot good art on album covers. I see a lot more individuality rather than just one typeset way of making things look. Making things look punk is also fun. There's a formula to that and it works.

Petite: Does it go hand-in-hand with the music or do you think the music's lagging behind?

John: Nah, music's gotten better. Music's gotten better because there's been more splintering off in the punk scene. There's

the mohawk crowd, the striped shirt crowd, the emo-boy crowd and [laughs] whatever.

Petite: Do you identify with any crowd?

John: Well, no, not really. At home, all I really listen to is blues, '60s garage, and '70s punk rock. I'm not that hip on new bands. If I come across a band at a show that I like, I buy their record. If I see something by them later, I'll buy that too. I don't really identify with any branch of the punk scene. I dress pretty much that same way my parents dressed me when I was a little kid. This is what I believe: When I do posters nowadays I pretty much break even when I do independent ones. I don't put a lot of effort into marketing them. I don't have a website where I sell my posters. I have had gallery shows of my work. One thing I feel really strongly about is that all the stuff be used to promote the show or be use as merchandise. Even the posters I've signed and numbered have gotten stapled to

John: What do you mean? My laziness? Well, I've always been a person with sort of abstract ideas. I could make myself bust up laughing about something that happened when I was five. When I go through old books in the garbage or at the thrift store I think they're so funny. I think it's funny and people look at me and think, "Yeah, all right. Sure, John. You're a nut." Then I put it on a poster and slap a band name on it and suddenly it's cool. I need these band names on my art to get the point across. Band names on the posters sort of soften people up and opens this door for an audience. If you take away the band names, it's just weird images and things I find entertaining. I have this weird sense of humor of what I think is cool and I guess that's in everything I do. Some of the stuff I do I look at years later and I wonder that the hell I was thinking. Like this one Vandals poster I did was a picture of this guy and he was

SURE, WITH COMPUTERS EVERYONE CAN BE AN ARTIST, BUT THE END RESULT SHOWS WHAT YOU KNOW AND IF YOU'RE GOOD. I DON'T THINK IT MOCKS WHAT I DO. I THINK WHAT I'M DOING MOCKS WHAT REAL GRAPHIC ARTISTS DID BEFORE ME.

telephone poles and put up in record store windows. That's what I feel about this stuff – punk poster art is folk art. It's just whatever I was feeling in my head that week and whatever was going on in the scene that influenced the design. The poster is just a mirror of what was happening. I think it's totally wrong when some well-known poster artist like Frank Kozik or Coop... well, let me just say that some people in bands who have had posters done by those artists say they never even got one. I let the bands have some and I don't board them in that way. You'll never see any of their posters promoting something in a record store window. It doesn't happen. It just goes straight into somebody's collection. My stuff's pretty scarce. There's a lot of stuff I don't even have copies of. That could be because I gave the last few to the band or because the whole stack got used to promote the show and maybe I saved one of two just for the record. What I do is folk art.

I have no formal art training. I took Art 31A, which was a general art class, and I dropped out half way through because I didn't want to buy a set of seventy-five dollar pens. My background is from more of a technical, graphic art field. I'm all into absurd ideas and I have nothing to lose. Sometimes I'd do posters for shows and I didn't get paid anything. Over the years it's turned into, "Oh, just let John go and he'll turn up with something kind of weird and funny." I'm really thankful to the people who let me do that.

Petite: Is there anything that you put into every piece or poster that you do that makes it characteristically yours?

smiling really big and he had the most messed up looking, rotten teeth. That was the centerpiece of the poster. One of my current fascinations is with photos in the *LA Express* and hootchie girls, very sexual images. I'm not putting women down or anything. It's like, hey whatever floats your boat.

Petite: What do you see yourself doing in the future?

John: Working at the post office. No, I don't know. I'd rather get more into designing CD covers and magazine covers. Well, I did some album and 7" covers for the Skulls and one cover for *Destroy All Monthly*. I got a t-shirt line too and that's just design work. No bands or anything. Concert posters, I've done so many of them. Anybody who wants to get a start doing art of the music industry, either they're silk screeners or they're offset or digital. It's the best way you can get your name out there. I see myself doing the same or just strictly fine art. There's more money and less effort in that.

Petite: So, you've done some fine art?

John: My thing with the fine art prints is they're all one of a kind. They're half silk screen and half hand painted. The silk screen is really just an image template. I'll silk screen the image on a beat-up piece of steel and paint it. I love old fashioned hand lettered signs and weathered rusted things. That stuff's very poppy. I'm still not thinking about whether I'm going to sell it or not when I'm making it. The market for that is mostly women, old punk rock women.



Mr. Private Sector Meets Mr. Public Service And Vice Versa

Article by Jason Dick

"The two real political parties in America are the Winners and the Losers. The people don't acknowledge this. They claim membership in two imaginary parties, the Republicans and the Democrats, instead."

—Kurt Vonnegut

BIG DICK

Meet Dick Cheney. He's the Vice President of the United States under current President George W. Bush. Former Secretary of Defense under President George H.W. Bush. Former Congressman from Wyoming. Former Chief of Staff under President Gerald Ford. A career public servant.

He also worked in the private sector, as the Chief Executive Officer of Halliburton Company, one of the world's largest providers of oil field services.

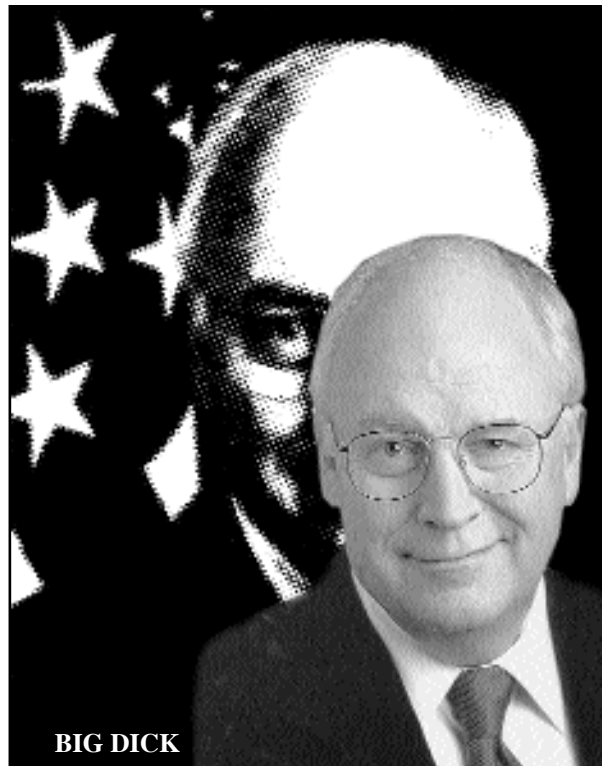
He worked for Halliburton from 1995 until 2000, when he was asked to find a vice presidential candidate for then-candidate George W. Bush. In an act of benevolence and sacrifice, he looked over the resumes of several very capable people, and then he forwarded his own name.

Everyone in the Bush world thought it was a great idea indeed for Cheney to make such a sacrifice to forgo the riches of the private sector for the mundane and paltry fiscal returns, but rich spiritual rewards, of public service.

Except Cheney still has some ties to Halliburton. In addition to his vice presidential salary, Cheney received \$162,392 from Halliburton last year. The sum was in the form of deferred salary payments.

When he quit Halliburton to run for vice president, Cheney sold his company stock and gave the profits from his stock options to charity. He was due about \$800,000 in cash still. Instead of taking it all at once, he elected to receive it in installments until 2005. Executives do this kind of stuff at times to avoid big tax liabilities. Is this legal? Yes.

Does it stink to be receiving money from a former employer that has dealings



And apparently the Army did not publicize that Halliburton had been authorized to operate and distribute oil as well.

before your government? Yes.

The deferred salary payments and Cheney's government salary are measly compared to his overall financial worth. In May, Cheney filed a disclosure form with the Office of Government Ethics. It stated that he and his wife Lynne Cheney were worth somewhere between \$19 million and \$86 million.

By the way, wouldn't it be great if we could all use such fuzzy math in financial disclosure forms? Wouldn't it be great to

tell a mortgage broker that you had assets of as much as \$10 million... or \$17,000 less taxes, when you want to buy a house?

Anyway. Back to reality.

Halliburton is one of those companies that kind of reeks of money. It started as a small Texas oil business in 1916 and along the way got really huge.

Not everything it does is so bad. It has divisions, like KBR (Kellogg, Brown & Root) that do stuff like put out oil fires and repair oil wells that have been blown up by really bad people and accidents. That's usually a good thing, to put out an oil fire. But a great deal of the money that has gone into the coffers of Halliburton and its divisions like KBR comes from taxpayer money. And sometimes the jobs it lines up are arrived at through dubious means.

Take Iraq. Present day Iraq, that is. In March, the Army secretly awarded a no-bid contract to Halliburton to fight any possible Iraqi oil fires and repair oil well infrastructure that would arise from hostilities in Gulf War II.

Several people took notice and criticized the arrangement. They were met with several answers, one of which people took notice of: Halliburton was in a unique position to most effectively deal with this stuff. If they put out the fires and got everything working quickly, so much better for the Iraqi people. So the argument went.

Then in May, word leaked from somewhere unfortunate that Halliburton had a bigger role, actually, than what had originally been publicized. You see, presently, Halliburton is running the oil wells in Iraq.

Fire and structural damage was a whole lot less than what most people thought it would be – or not – depending on your per-

spective on the matter. And apparently the Army did not publicize that Halliburton had been authorized to operate and distribute oil as well.

Oh, did we forget that? Sorry, the Army said.

As of early May, Halliburton was pumping 125,000 barrels of oil a day and hoped to up that to 400,000 in the summer. The company will keep pumping oil and exporting it – on behalf of the Iraqi people of course – until the Iraqi people are ready to take over the operation. If you have seen anything about how Iraq is functioning right now as a government and society, it is hard to imagine this will be anytime soon.

And Cheney had dealings with Halliburton before becoming its CEO. When Cheney was Secretary of Defense under President George H.W. Bush, the current president's father, he awarded Halliburton the Army's first private contract to manage troop tent cities.

After Cheney became CEO, Halliburton lost that contract, coming under fire for overcharging for services. It happens to plenty of companies. The proverbial \$600 toilet seat.

But then in December 2001, before Cheney had been vice president one full year, Halliburton was awarded a ten-year contract with the military worth upwards of \$1 billion for an arrangement called the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program, or LOGCAP, providing many of the same services they did previously for the military.

Halliburton knew whom they were hiring in 1995, a guy who would get them contracts through contacts. And the hits just keep on coming.

BIG SNOW

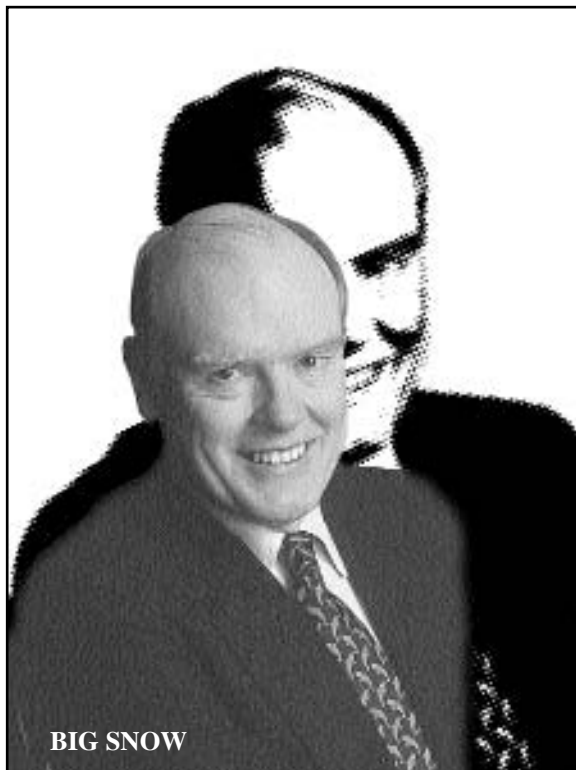
Meet John Snow. He is the United States Treasury Secretary under current President George W. Bush. Former Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board at CSX Corporation, the largest rail system operator in the eastern United States. He was an official in the Ford administration and was head of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in 1976 and 1977.

Snow became CEO of CSX in 1991. In his 12 years as chief executive and chairman of the board, he was paid more than \$50 million in salary, bonus and stock. In that time, the company's profits have fallen, while the stock price has increased approximately 50 percent. In 1991, the company had a profit of \$382 million, and Snow was paid \$1.6 million and got 134,000 stock options. In 2001, CSX had a profit of \$293 million and

Snow was paid \$10.1 million in cash and stock grants and got 800,000 stock options worth \$8 million.

Many public companies require their top executives to own a percentage of stock in the company, theoretically to tie the company's interest to the interests of the executives. Until the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 outlawed companies giving their officers and directors loans, it was commonplace for a company to loan an execu-

No wonder this guy was the Bush administration's point man in selling a tax cut that will reduce government revenues at a time of record government budget deficits.



BIG SNOW

tive money to buy the shares of the company under the company's mandatory stock ownership plan.

In 1996, CSX loaned Snow \$24.5 million to buy shares. He put up \$7 million of his own money as a down payment. The company said the down payments that executives made were at risk until the entire purchase amount had been paid in full. Under this loan program, Snow had more than \$32 million in stock in 1996.

Then in 2000, CSX cancelled Snow's loan – and the loans of other executives utilizing the program – after the stock price of CSX shares had dropped 40 percent from their 1996 levels. CSX took back the shares Snow had bought under the program, cancelled the loan, and returned his down payment. By 2000, the \$7 million down pay-

ment to buy shares was worth about \$4 million.

This is kind of interesting. It would be like Joe Schmoe putting up earnest money and a down payment and securing a 30-year mortgage for the purpose of buying a house, then, four years later – when the house had mildewed and the neighborhood had turned crime-ridden and an earthquake had destroyed the foundation, and the worth of the house had declined 40 percent since time of purchase – the bank taking possession of the house, canceling the mortgage – with no adverse credit reporting – and refunding the down payment and earnest money, but with interest.

No wonder this guy was the Bush administration's point man in selling a tax cut that will reduce government revenues at a time of record government budget deficits. When you can borrow at no risk and get back your initial investment after the lender decides it is not interested in pursuing the loan anymore, why would you not think a government can have its cake and eat it, too?

But it gets better. To top things off for Snow, consider his pension plan at CSX. As many people are beginning to find out, their pensions are now tied to the invisible hand of the marketplace. As the stock and bond markets go, so go their pensions.

Snow worked at CSX for 25 years total. He will receive more years of service credit though – 44 in all – in a nifty little trick that companies are increasingly employing to enrich executives. It is called a supplemental executive retirement plan, and it is more under-the-radar than simply salary, bonus, and equity payouts. By enhancing years of service credited to pension plans, some executives are making out quite well after they leave.

Snow refused \$15 million in severance benefits he was entitled to when he became Treasury Secretary. But he will collect about \$2.5 million a year until he dies under his pension, just a tad higher than his \$161,200 per year salary as Treasury Secretary.

Nice retirement, if you can get it. But you can't.

BIG BOB

Meet Robert Rubin. He is the Number Two Man at Citigroup Inc., the world's second largest financial services firm in the world and the first U.S. bank with more than \$1 trillion in assets. Officially, his title at Citigroup is Chairman of the Executive Committee, Director, and Member of the Office of the Chairman of Citigroup Inc., an office of two consisting of Rubin and Citigroup Chairman of the

Board and Chief Executive Officer Sanford Weill.

Rubin started his career in financial services at Goldman Sachs & Company investment bank in 1966. He made his way up in the Goldman Sachs ranks all the way to Co-Senior Partner and Co-CEO.

In between the stints at Goldman Sachs and Citigroup, Rubin served as President Bill Clinton's Assistant for Economic Policy from 1993 to 1995. And from 1995 to 1999, he was Clinton's Treasury Secretary.

Rubin was instrumental in pushing the government to pay down its debt and eliminate budget deficits. After the White House and Congress started taking his advice, the United States entered one of the longest periods of economic growth in history.

By most people's accounts, Rubin is an all around good guy. He is smart, rich, and dedicated to public service. There is even a clause in his employment contract with Citigroup that takes into account his long record of public service and frees him up to serve on just about any blue ribbon commission that he wants to. He has been mentioned as a possible successor to Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan.

But Citigroup has been in the spotlight for much of the past year regarding its business practices. Citigroup, and other big Wall Street financial firms, were the targets of wide-reaching probes into whether they hyped up the relative worth of their own clients to small investors. As part of a settlement with regulators, Citigroup will pay \$400 million in fines.

No one has accused Rubin of being even remotely involved. To the contrary, he canned two of Citigroup's senior investment bankers in the wake of the aforementioned probe in a move to clean house.

But he also got a bonus of \$10 million dollars – in addition to his \$1 million salary – in a year when a lot of Citigroup's clients – particularly people who had invested their pensions and retirement – lost their shirts. And most of those people – a sizable number of them – are small investors one can be sure.

Ten million clams. That is a lot of money. It made Rubin the highest paid employee at Citigroup, higher than the CEO and Chairman, Sandy Weill.

At Citigroup's annual meeting, some shareholders made the suggestion that some of the money that went to Rubin's bonus could have gone to clients who lost everything or nearly everything listening to dubious advice from Citigroup's compromised research analysts.

The reaction from Weill, Rubin's boss? "I think

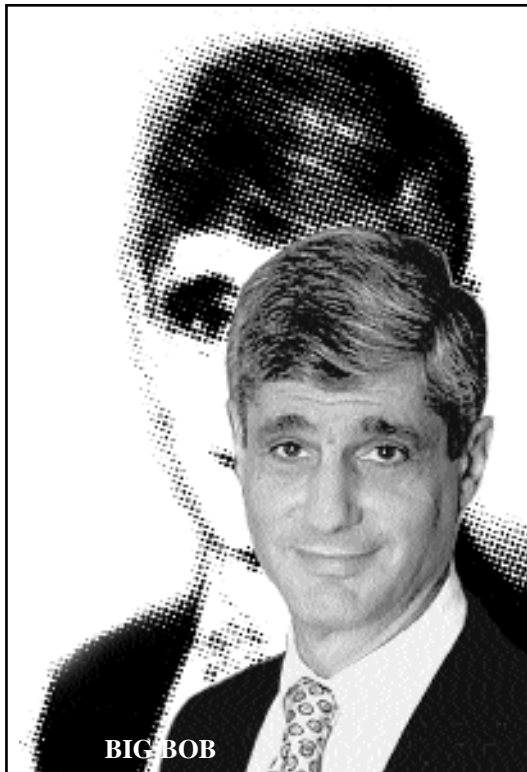
management deserves every penny they get paid."

Well, okay.

BIG BILL [and not Heywood]

Meet William Daley. He is the President of SBC Communications, the second largest local phone service provider in the U.S. SBC has 57 million phone lines in 13 states. It also has a partnership with Bell South – Cingular Wireless – to form the second largest wireless phone operation in the U.S. with 22 million users in 38 states.

But he also got a bonus of \$10 million dollars – in addition to his \$1 million salary – in a year when a lot of Citigroup's clients... lost their shirts.



BIG BOB

He was President Bill Clinton's Commerce Secretary from 1997 to 2000. He was chairman of Al Gore's presidential campaign in 2000. He went toe to toe with the Bush family heavies during the Florida recounts in 2000. He's thought about running for governor of Illinois. His brother is the current mayor of Chicago. His father is the former mayor of Chicago, the one who let loose the city's police force with billy clubs and beatings at the 1968 Democratic Nominating Convention.

In short, he's a player in Democratic politics, with a name and a record that commands respect. And that is exactly why SBC hired him to be their second dog.

When AT&T was broken up in 1984 into seven "Baby Bell" regional operating companies, SBC's original nom de plume, Southwestern Bell, was one of the babies berthed.

Since then, they have done everything they can to become as big and bigger than AT&T ever was. Southwestern Bell, renamed SBC in 1994, expanded into wireless and long distance throughout the 1980s and 1990s and in 1999 bought fellow Baby Bell Ameritech. This, by the way, follows the pattern of other Baby Bells who have all gone on a tear to be bigger companies than AT&T could ever have dreamed of: Verizon, Bell South, Qwest.

And this is where Daley comes in. He doesn't have a lot of telecommunications experience. But he is an arm twister, an arm breaker when he needs to be. And if Daley cannot open a door, he can kick it in. He gets what he wants in a public policy debate. Well almost, Al Gore is saying.

Why hire a brutish political lawyer to be the muscle in a large telecommunications firm? Because the doors Daley opens are to regulators and lawmakers who may be getting squeamish about letting a phone company like SBC establish dominance in telecommunications.

After all, that is why AT&T was broken up in the first place. It was too big. It provided everything: local service, long distance, even the dang phone. Remember Lily Tomlin's "We're the Phone Company" shtick? Maybe some regulators and lawmakers have long enough memories to remember that it is not always such a great thing to have one company establish total control over something as vital as telecommunication.

Among the moves SBC has made, there are a few standouts. It wants to offer long distance in Michigan, but even the Bush administration – not exactly an unfriendly stranger to Big Business – cannot support its bid to do so. The Justice Department has stated that SBC has not done enough in Michigan to ensure local competition, a prerequisite to be met before a Baby Bell can sell long distance in a given market.

What else? Well, SBC has backed legislation in Illinois – failing to hold state regulators' feet to the fire long enough for them to beg for mercy – that seeks to double wholesale phone rates. And that's in Illinois, Daley's home state, where his brother is still Mayor of Chicago, home to many people whose phone bills would increase not a little.

As Daley himself said in May about the legislation: "We're being aggressive about pricing." No kidding. As my Dear Old Dad would say: "That guy's got more balls than a pool hall."

When he was hired in 2001, Daley got a signing

bonus from SBC of \$1.1 million. Last year he made \$612,000 in salary and \$809,310 in bonus at SBC.

The company said he would get about \$2.1 million in stock options and share grants in 2002, and that he would also get performance shares in the range of \$800,000 for last year and this year.

In addition, he gets one of those nifty retirement plans where he gets credit for more years than he works, and his pension will be based on a minimum average of \$1.2 million a year. Now, he has to work five years to get that benefit. Unless, of course, he is fired before the end of next year or if he leaves the company for any reason as of January 1, 2005, he gets full retirement. Not bad work.

If Lily Tomlin were to update her "We're the Phone Company" skit now, then she would have her pick of the litter of Baby Bells to satirize – SBC, Verizon, Qwest, Bell South. All of these Baby Bells have done old Ma Bell proud. Then again, maybe Bill Daley will be there, lobbying for any late night television program to bar any such skit and have Tomlin's arm twisted – or broken.

Voting Rights. Yeah Right.

These four politically powerful men have connections to powerful publicly traded corporations, either past or present. To be listed as a public company, to get people to buy shares in companies, there are several safeguards in place to protect investors.

One is regulation by the federal Securities and Exchange Commission. The SEC takes laws passed by Congress and tries to make sense out of how to enforce them. In order to be publicly traded, companies agree to adhere to SEC regulations and the law. If they don't, they can get fined and executives found responsible can go to jail.

This sounds great in theory, but the fines generally do not reach a size capable of doing damage to a company's bottom line. And most corporate wrongdoers, the crooked chief financial officers that the television news likes to show walking out of a building in handcuffs to dramatic flair, rarely do any hard time.

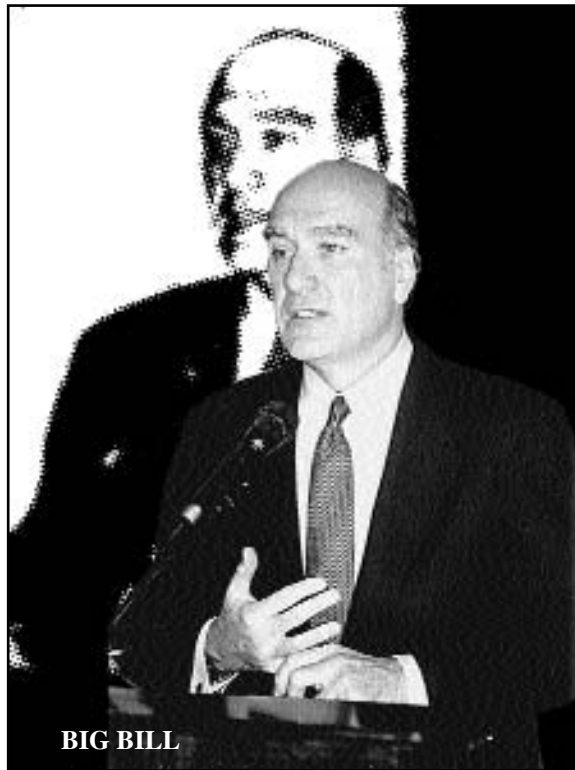
Another way that the public is supposed to have input into the corporate process is through proxy voting rights. Put simply, if you buy stock in a company, you have a say in how it is run. Every year around springtime, publicly traded corporations disperse their proxy voting sheets to all shareholders. Smaller

investors – like people who have a 401 (k) through their work – usually get these in the mail, look them over, figure they have no clue what the hell it is, and pitch it in the trash.

Most of the voting in proxy season is done by larger investors, like institutional investing entities such as state retirement systems and labor unions. But some smaller investors do take their voting rights seriously, just as voters in, say, North Central West Virginia. What do they get to vote on?

For one, they get to vote, usually yes or no, to the nominees for membership to the board of directors. Typically, the board or the management of the company presents a list of nominees, recommends that shareholders vote "yes," and the list of candidates wins by wide margins. If a stockhold-

He doesn't have a lot of telecommunications experience. But he is an arm twister, an arm breaker when he needs to be.



er is interested in nominating his or her own list of candidates, that stockholder is usually told he has to foot the bill for printing proxies and the cost of his candidates to run.

For most small investors, the contribution to the voting process in a company they own stock in is relegated to voting up or down on what management wants.

But that is not all. You see, those companies can have their list of candidates to the board voted down, or can have their

proposals for executive pay or anything else really, and be voted down by the shareholders, even by large margins, and... they do not have to abide by the final vote.

Some companies do abide by votes. But the funny part is they are not legally bound to abide by the votes of the people who own the company. So, in the publicly traded corporate world, management can feel free to disregard the votes and wishes of the people who own the company and do whatever they want anyway.

A guy who gets more votes than another guy is not necessarily the guy who gets elected. Interesting scenario.

Get to the Point Already

So what? So I have compiled an impressive, but by no means exhaustive, set of facts regarding four powerful men. What can you read from this?

It is a pretty simple, straightforward equation. Corporate executives make a lot of money in the private sector. They get elected or appointed to public office. They help develop laws and regulations that benefit their former companies and contemporaries – while getting paid to do so with taxpayer money. And after a short time they go back to the private sector to make even more money because now they have even more connections than before. Or vice versa. Either way, they make a lot of money, thanks in large part to taxpayers. Nice work if you can get it. And they do.

The guys currently in power, the Republicans, went from being handsomely compensated in the private sector to determining the agenda and outlook of the public, and world, process.

The guys currently out of power, the Democrats, went from directing the agenda of the public administration to being handsomely compensated in the private sector. Who wins? They do. Just check the amount of money these guys are pulling down. After that, it just depends on who is in office at any given point. There are substantive differences in the political parties, but after a certain point, it gets back to the Vonnegut quote at the beginning of this fair tale. Winners or

losers.

What can one do? You can vote, and see who wins in the end.

Jason Dick is a writer in Washington, DC, who loves looking at easily accessible public records.



Turbonegro

FROM THE ASHES OF THIS GOLDEN AGE OF CONFUSION...

Resurrections are rarely this satisfying. I'd had the good fortune to catch the Norwegian denim demons a couple of times prior to Hank's mental breakdown. No big crowds, rabid Turbojugend. Tight science. Circa '98, as Turbonegro's *Apocalypse Dudes* was fully taking grasp in the United States, the rug was pulled. It was like watching the space shuttle fire its rockets, only to have the parking brake engaged right before its ass left the pad. The engines were turned off. The apparatus disassembled. Official word was that the band was kaput. Instead of the memory of Turbonegro – one of the true underground heroes of '90s punk rock – dissolving into ether, their records continued to sell, their myth enlarged. In fact, in death, they became bigger than ever. It was a testament that they were both ahead of their time and their songs were becoming timeless.

Rewind. With *Ass Cobra*, Turbonegro broke their early musical bonds to Mudhoney, and constructed hooky, vicious axe handle assaults of songs by mixing Poison Idea, the Dicks, and The Lewd. Their barbed wire affection for punk rock also took a new twist. They began to grasp the power of a panel of things that would truly horrify the general populace and claim them dedicated throngs: homoerotic denim sailor punk. Were they joking when they yelled "Hole in the ground. Erection!?" Definitely. Were they serious when they hated "your new wave hooker girlfriend"? More so.

With *Apocalypse Dudes*, the punk was sieved through rock. Glorious, dark, weaving rock that was stadium-filling, anxious, complex, and monstrously hooky. Anthems that riots could be held to. Pimple glam for people with beer guts. Sweaty salvation. It's even more satisfying when you realize they're singing about "a headache in their pants" and "sperminator of the asshole." It's so unapologetic – not made for the radio but the music fan. Huge destruction has rarely sounded as sweet.

It's 2003. Turbonegro's back, have released *Scandinavian Leather*, and are playing live. Heed this simple advice – see them. You have that rare, real second chance.

Interview by Todd Taylor

Pictures by Dan Monick



Todd: How does resurrection feel?

Happy Tom: Great.

Todd: Is it better the second time around?

Happy Tom: Yeah. We never wanted to stop playing in the first place. Hank was doing better, we all started getting restless, and we got some really incredible offers from these festivals this summer. We said, "Hey, let's try it and if we're better than we used to be, let's keep going, but if we're worse, we'll just have fun this summer." So we earned this really immense response from people and played for all these people and they went nuts. Then we listened to the recordings and said, "This is much better than we've sounded ever." We took it seriously. We rehearsed for a couple of months, and said okay. We'd already talked to labels and

said, "Okay, let's do another record."

Todd: So, this is actually the second time that you broke up, correct?

Happy Tom: We've broken up a couple of times, but this one was real.

Todd: What did happen in Milan? Why did it end there? [Hank walks in as the question is asked.]

Hank: What happened in Milan? I don't have much remembrance of it. I had this mental breakdown. My hallucinations grew stronger and more vivid and real than the real world, so I just needed some help.

Todd: Does Norway have socialized medicine?

Hank: Yeah, we do.

Todd: Could you get a program through that?

Hank: Oh, yeah everyone is safe in Norway. You don't need a social security number. You don't need insurance. You're

always taken care of.

Happy Tom: It's getting worse.

Todd: Is it?

Happy Tom: Trying to private enterprise it.

Todd: That's awful. So, what have you guys been doing in the intermediate years? I've heard that someone's a real estate developer?

Happy Tom: I'm in market analyst. I actually teach consumer behavior at the business school in Oslo. It's kind of fun because it really pisses off all the little punkers.

Todd: Do you apply those things to Turbonegro?

Happy Tom: No. If we did – that's for all the press in Norway. Because Rune works for the major label and everybody knows that we're kind of smart guys, so they're like, whenever we have a success, "Yeah, no wonder. Those guys are strategists, you know." And whenever someone has a success they're like, "Oh this is great, it's a Cinderella fairytale." And we're like, "Fuck off." I've been in bands for twenty-two years and we never made any money. If

we're so smart how could we have a band name that could be interpreted as racist in some way? Or, how come we have a terrible image. Stupid, silly hats.

Todd: I have a couple of questions about that. It'd be wrong to call you guys a joke band, because there's definitely a level of seriousness.

Happy Tom: That's what we say. If you think that Turbonegro's a joke band, then you're really missing out on the biggest joke.

Todd: You're playing with people's fears a lot, especially with homosexuality and fascist imagery. What are your aims with these two concepts specifically put together?

Happy Tom: Just because rock'n'roll should be about freedom. To achieve freedom there has to be some danger in there. You have to break a couple eggs to make an omelet. When we first started doing the homo thing – this era that we grew up

in – was the epicenter of black metal in Norway and all of our friends were killing each other and burning down churches. And we're like, "Fuck. How can we out-do this? What is the only thing that scares even these guys? Ahhh! Homos!" So we got the sailor caps and the make-up. They gave us props for it, though. The guy in Mayhem said that Turbonegro's the most evil band in the world.

Hank: It's also a kind of a tension relief. I was talking to another guy just now and figured out that a lot of kids who are going gay-bashing get some tension relief and kids who are uptight about their own sexuality get their own tension relief. It's all about tension relief and if we can stop some people bullying homos or help some homo coming out, why not?

Happy Tom: Or make some homo go back into the closet again, that's nice, too. It's all about personal growth.

Todd: Do you think that your aims are more complex than the bands that influenced you to be in a rock'n'roll band?

Happy Tom: I think we have the same exact – we just basically want to rock out. We could take off. We could stop doing all our silly stuff and we'd still be a great band.

Hank: I would love to do some skin, you know, cry a lot. Or torn anus. Share myself a lot. Share my traumas a lot, and cry about it all the time. Like this crying body of fans telling me their personal stories – that they'd lived through the same thing.

Happy Tom: A catharsis? A public catharsis.

Hank: I would love to do that.

Todd: Was it true that you were on a death list for neo-Nazis?

Hank: I was on it.

Todd: Was the band itself on it?

Hank: Not the band, no.

Happy Tom: We're Nazis, he's not.

Todd: I'm just trying to see if there were any paradoxes.

Hank: I had a radio show and I was basically fucking in all directions. The police were busting up this very hardcore, violent nazi group because they were doing death threats to really famous politicians. They found the death list of big Jews in the financial world and politicians. In the middle of that list, my name came up.

Todd: Was it pretty scary?

Hank: No, I wasn't that scared.

Happy Tom: The thing with neo-Nazis is like, "This week it's my turn to be the Fuehrer!" "No, you were already the Fuehrer!" It's true. That's why they never get anything done.

Todd: There's always a power struggle.

Hank: They're even worse than Trotskyists when it comes to splitting and sectarianism. The cops called me about it and offered me some special attention. I never felt that was proper at all. It's just these kids with guns. Let 'em shoot me.

Todd: What do you think has changed in the world when Sid Vicious and Ron Asheton (Stooges) could sport swastikas and they didn't really get a lot of guff, but someone in Turbonegro had swastikas painted over their eyelids, there was a lot of trouble with that.

Hank: It wasn't a lot of trouble with that.

Happy Tom: People have suspected us of that.

Hank: It is true. There was a thing with punk in the late seventies that they actually could wear swastikas.

Todd: Siouxi Sioux could do it.

Hank: As a statement, as a negative statement. We could never do that today, and I don't think we should either, because the situation is so hardened now. The fronts are so polarized. So, we should not wear swastikas. We should just stay with cross burning.

And dressing up as mongoloid goats.

Todd: What is the power of provocation that fascinates you?

Hank: We never aim to provoke.

Happy Tom: Just irritate a little.



"The door is ajar." How could a door be a jar? I felt like a marionette right there and then. I'm just a marionette. This isn't a door. It's a jar. I'm a puppet. -Hank

*I think it's better to be fake in
an honest way than to be honest
in a fake way. -Happy Tom*



Carbonegro

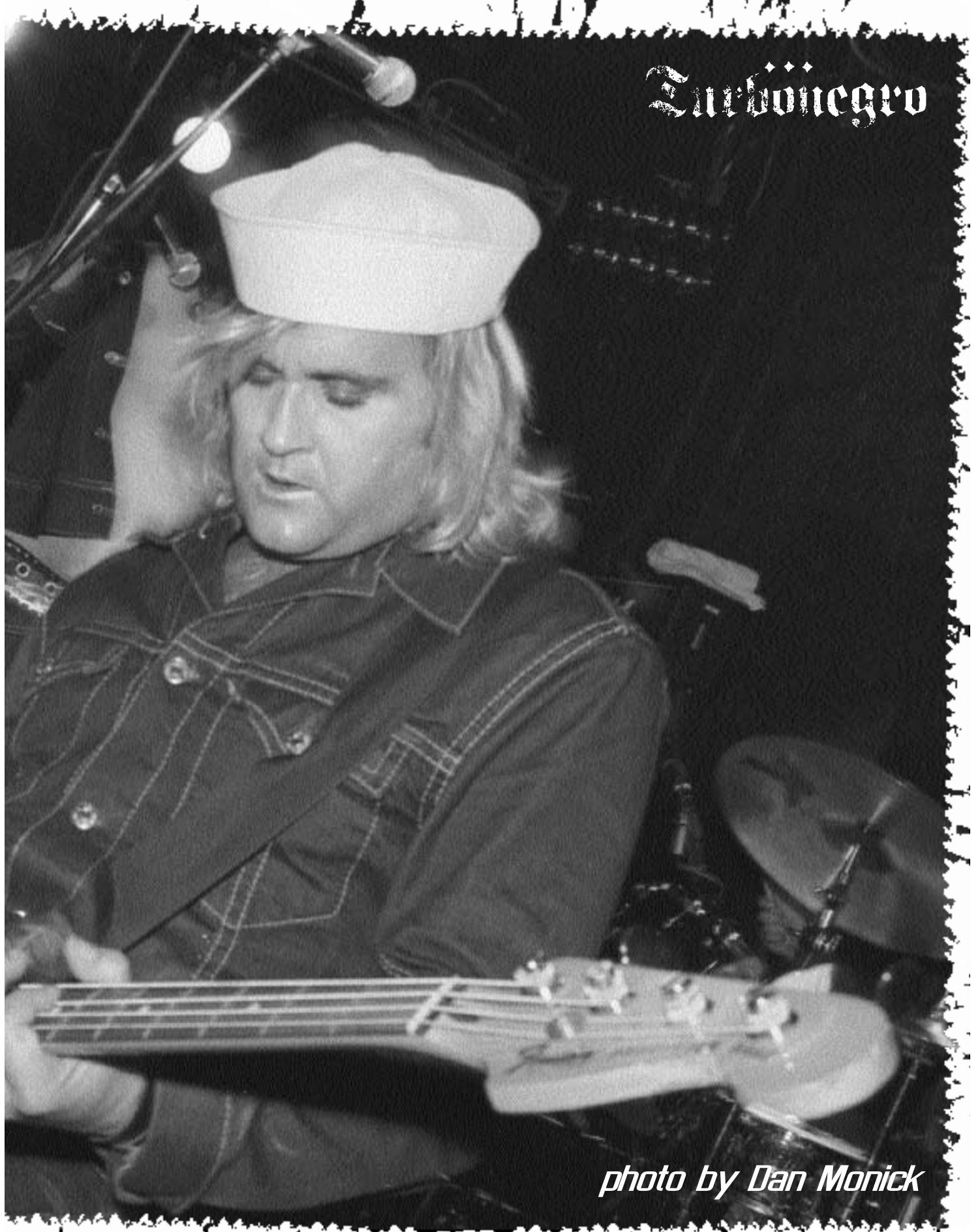


photo by Dan Monick



Hank: And it's not irony; it's just plain sarcasm.

Todd: This is a personal question. I don't know what you have against "new wave hooker girlfriends." I mean, new wave chicks are pretty hot. Is there anything specific?

Hank: They're just so uptight about anal sex. And I'm an ass man, you know.

Happy Tom: Always in subcultures there'll be couples and the guy will always be into the harder-edged version of the subculture. In Norway, a lot of the black metal guys have goth girlfriends, 'cause that's sort of the watered-out version. It's more effeminate.

Hank: I actually got a letter last year from a guy who told me that his best friend was a hardcore punk rocker, Turbonegro fan and he was marrying a girl who was totally into Weezer and new punk and Limp Biscuit. I was telling him I was going to write a death threat to him as a wedding gift, that he'd married a new wave hooker girl. It was so typical, that couple. He was really hardcore into punk and metal, but she was all into those new MTV shit.

Todd: What do you really hate the most? If you know you're using imagery that will bring a reaction...

Happy Tom: What I hate most now is all the nagging, like in Scandinavian rock, that you have to be "for real."

Todd: What does that mean?

Happy Tom: I guess it means you have to dress up like Lynyrd Skynyrd. That means you're real. It's these middle-class Scandinavians dressing up as poor Americans. I think it's fucked up. It's depressing. We had that in Norway, back in the seventies where upper class people will become radicalized and dress up like the working class people and go work in the factories.

Hank: Basically slumming.

Happy Tom: My wife is a third generation soap factory worker and her parents always told her, "There's some people at the factory who dress up like us, but don't talk to them because they're the enemy." And that's rock'n'roll all over again. I hate that. I think it's better to be fake in an honest way than to be honest in a fake way.

Todd: I totally agree. Can you clarify this statement: "Apocalypse Dudes is about jerking off, despite a massive amount of sexual interest from great-looking people."

Happy Tom: It's about isolating yourself.

Todd: Really?

Happy Tom: Self-imposed exile on the

island of St. Helens.

Todd: Why is that? Why the self-imposed...

Happy Tom: I was just saying that.

Todd: Okay: true or false, in 1994/95 Turbonegro went through an Al Jolson phase?

Happy Tom: Yeah.

Todd: And you actually hung out with Bad Brains?

Happy Tom: We were sitting backstage with black face and huge afro wigs.

Todd: Total black face, like big wide lips?

Happy Tom: Shoe shine.

Hank: Dressing up like minstrels.

Happy Tom: And they didn't mention it. I guess they just thought it funny, and when they offered us pot, we decided on smoking it.

Hank: Nobody mentioned it. It didn't strike us until the day after - Hey we're sitting there with black face, 'cause we're all drunk.

Todd: Do you think other people take more of an offense to that then? I mean, I live in a poor neighborhood and we hang out with our neighbors all the time. People seem to get more offended on their behalf than these people do themselves. Do you come across that?

Happy Tom: It's like that in Norway. A lot of journalists go, "Oh, Turbonegro, they're standing in front of a big breakthrough, but they'll never make it in America because of their band name." I mean, half the people that we play to are black and they know every word of our lyrics. They want black people – if you're black, you should only be into hip-hop. And we tell them, hey, there's a lot of black kids into punk in the states, there always has been since Bad Brains. And even before that with Neon Leon.

Hank: But they're not supposed to be. So there's oppression once again.

Todd: Have you ever been on an FBI file? I'm thinking of the song "Midnight NAM-BLA." The Candy Snatchers are on an FBI file because they had picture of a little girl and she's showing her panties and licking a lollipop on a t-shirt. The FBI take that kind of seriously.

Hank: This is a very anti-pedophilic song.

Communist Party," that "I've never been in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War." He asked them what was wrong with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, that was people from the Democratic party, right? They said, "If you want your son to attain citizenry, just sign that paper." So, at least my dad has file.

Todd: Who loves dolphins?

Happy Tom: Everybody.

Hank: I love dolphins. Don't you?

Todd: I love dolphins.

Hank: They're loving creatures.

Todd: Yes they are.

Hank: They can speak. Some of them are actually so intelligent that they're really bad. Swearing, and they're badmouthing tuna fish, oppressing tuna.

Happy Tom: Ruining those tuna nets.

Hank: That's funny. We heard that's why Guns n Roses – that was the last final straw why they broke up – because Axl insisted

Hank: And cures for cancer. That's cool, to cure cancer. I prefer that.

Happy Tom: I think Tolkien himself was extremely conservative.

Hank: Also, someone claims, especially Norwegians – some of them are Nazis, actually – but they claim that Sauron, the dark side, are all like symbols of old Norse gods. And the one eye, the evil force, that's actually a symbol of Odin, the one-eyed god. They are kind of intimidated by that as well, that Tolkien had a really negative outlook on the old Norse religion.

Todd: I know Burzum, the black metal band, had taken their name from Tolkien actually. It's Dark Speech for "darkness."

Hank: He's actually talking about this a lot. How he would choose the dark side in Tolkien's world because it's the one eye. Odin is for him. I don't agree with that, personally.

Todd: Didn't your uncle work for Thor

Dolphins can speak. Some of them are actually so intelligent that they're really bad. Swearing, and they're badmouthing tuna fish, oppressing tuna.

-Hank

We were reading about pedophiles in America actually organizing – this North America Man Boy Love Association – and we read an interview with the leader of that organization. It was so weak that he was trying to justify these crimes and suddenly I realized that they had an observation status in the UN as a gay organization.

Todd: Wow.

Hank: Yeah, so they, as an organization, have come pretty far.

Happy Tom: It's like if you take the rainbow flag and you mix all the colors and it turns black.
[laughter]

Hank: It was a really dark organization that wanted to come out legit. We just made that song. We've never done any bido aesthetics ever, and we would never do that.

Todd: Allen Ginsberg was a member of NAMBLA, actually.

Hank: Really? That says a lot. Sig transit gloria mundi.

Happy Tom: I've been on an FBI file.

Todd: Really?

Happy Tom: Yeah, my dad was an American radical. He was the youngest shop steward for the Teamsters, ever, in Kansas City. Then he became political. When I was born, he had to sign all these papers, "I've never be a member of the

on having dolphins in a video and Slash was like, "No!"

Todd: What's Turbonegro's beef with Tolkien, with Hobbits?

Hank: Tolkien himself was a great writer and a great scholar in the German languages and in the German folklore. It's a great book. It's a great story. It's founded on one of the greatest aspects of the European cultural heritage. What we don't like are the followers, the fans. The kids playing on the vacuum cleaner tubes wearing turds.

Happy Tom: There was so much of that in the '90s. We call them jugglers.

Hank: Yeah, trying to find a circus that they can run away with. Circus punks. And those turds as hair-dos. It's the fans we have something against.

Happy Tom: All of those films are really fascist, and so are the jugglers, because in the film the dark forces – look at the Hobbits. They live in a very idealized part of rural society, whereas the dark forces are all industrialized. They're just pumping people and steel out of the ground and that's evil, like technology is bad. Rural society looks like it's shifting and that's good. And that's wrong. I like industry, I like infrastructure.

Todd: I like electricity and plumbing.

Happy Tom: I like medicine and bridges.

Heyerdahl? And he did expeditions on Easter Island?

Happy Tom: Yeah, he was the chief archaeologist on Easter Island. So, whenever you see pictures from the fifties, you see a guy with a pipe – it looks like Matt Groening drew him – with a beard and a safari helmet, with a bare chest. Just like all the guys looked like in the fifties – that's him.

Todd: Did he go on the Kon-Tiki?

Happy Tom: No, that was too early. That was 1947.

Todd: But he was...

Happy Tom: Chief manager at the Kon-Tiki museum. We took Eugene Chadborne there when he was there.

Todd: Really? Did he enjoy it?

Happy Tom: Yeah, he liked it.

Todd: For American audiences, can you tell me who Gustav Vigeland is?

Happy Tom: He's a sculptor from Norway, early twentieth century.

Todd: Doesn't he have a large public park?

Happy Tom: There's a park with all his statues. It's all about man versus nature.

Todd: Right. Isn't there several of a naked guys...

Happy Tom: They're all naked.

Todd: ...booting babies, and they're flying all around?

Hank: It's very raw stuff.

Happy Tom: Somebody told us that that was Hitler's big dream, to see this park.

Hank: Vigeland was a Nazi. He has a brother, Emmanuel, who has a mausoleum.

Happy Tom: Like a bitter little brother who never got any recognition. He was a nihilist fascinated with pedophilia.

Todd: Really?

Hank: Pregnant women giving birth to skeleton babies.

Todd: Holy shit!

Hank: Copulating with devils and skeletons. It's a whole life cycle and it's in this mausoleum. And you have to go through a little door – bow down – and you turn and you see his urn is in the door, and you have to bow to it. There's these great acoustics in there, so a lot of contemporary musicians, they do great recordings down there.

Todd: No shit.

Hank: That mausoleum, it's a museum, and it's only open in the church hour on Sunday.

Todd: That's creepy.

Hank: He was really anti-religious and was really anti his brother. They were really enemies, but I prefer Emmanuel's works.

Todd: He was a sculptor, too?

Hank: Yes, that too, but he was a painter more. He spent his whole life building his own tomb.

Todd: I have a more philosophical question. You've said that *Apocalypse Dudes* is an important album because, "It is a timeless source. It's beyond good and evil."

Happy Tom: No shit!

Hank: *Hinsides gode og slem.*

Happy Tom: And what?

Todd: So, are you tapping into something that's primordial? Something that is before religion or morals came in?

Happy Tom: Blood and iron.

Todd: Is that what the claim is? I'm just trying to make sure.

Happy Tom: Yeah.

Todd: Who is Torunn Alsaker?

Happy Tom: Torunn Alsaker, that's how we got our band name. This is one of the versions. We were sitting by a ouija board – we just stole this story from Alice Cooper. And a woman had died in a car accident on New Years Eve in, 1987, outside of Oslo. Her spirit materialized and told us that we should start a band called Turbonegro.

Todd: Where did you find tracks of Evel Knievel playing country ballads?

Happy Tom: There was a record that came out during the seventies. It was pretty big.

Todd: What was it called?

Happy Tom: *The Ballad of Evel Knievel* or *Evel Knievel Sings* or something like that.

Todd: Did your mom go to school with Sirhan Sirhan? (The man accused of the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy shortly after midnight on June 5, 1968.)

Happy Tom: Yeah, in Pasadena.

Todd: In Pasadena? So, were you born here?

Happy Tom: No. Born in

Norway.

Todd: Did she say anything about him?

Happy Tom: No, she just recognized him when he was on TV in 1968. She's like, "That's my schoolmate."

Todd: When was the last time that you felt like a marionette, like a puppet?

Happy Tom: When I was a mime.

Todd: Really?

Happy Tom: No, I'm just kidding.

Hank: Well, the last time I did acid, I guess. I was in this car with a driving computer and it said to me, "The door is ajar." How could a door be a jar? I felt like a marionette right there and then. I'm just a marionette. This isn't a door. It's a jar. I'm a puppet.

Todd: Is it true that Euro-boy was a gymnast?

Happy Tom: Yeah.

Todd: Do you know what his discipline was?

Happy Tom: I'll go ask him.

[talking in Norwegian]

Hank: Oh, the horse with two handles.

Todd: The pommel horse.

Happy Tom: Is that what you call it? Pommel Horse?

Todd: Pommel, like when you have a saddle, the pommel is in the front, the part you tie the rope around... I have a series of questions about the Ass Rocket, are you okay with that? How many people have lit their cigarettes off of the Ass Rocket?

Hank: It was a skin, a Norwegian skinhead. That's been caught on film, but it has happened a couple of times.

Todd: Has anyone singed their eyebrows from it?

Hank: No, but I've burned some... hairs, from there. We've been very careful.

Todd: I was going to ask you that. Now is the Ass Rocket, is it really in there, or are you just clamping your cheeks?

Hank: Just clamping my cheeks.

Happy Tom: It's not a rocket.

Hank: It's just a cake sparkler that you put on a birthday cake at restaurants. We did it at the first show in New Orleans on this tour. The management and the house crew came tumbling down, almost crying. "After the Great White incident, you can't do pyro."

Happy Tom: What people are most afraid of – I think Americans are kind of a tough people, in many ways – but there's this culture of fear. So, after Great White, then people are going to be real obsessed with that. Maybe, after a year, everybody'll forget about it. I can understand club owners, "Hey we know you're not gonna burn down the house or anything, but if two people start freaking out..."

Todd: It's gonna set a shock wave.

Happy Tom: I mean, we never called it Ass Rocket, even.

Todd: What'd you call it? The sparkler?

Happy Tom: If people, like Norwegian journalists, say we set it up that we're big strategists and I think there's this curse over us that whenever we do something that it

turns into a big myth. It's almost like the chaos theory with the butterfly fluttering its wings and it turns into a hurricane on the other side of the globe. It's like when Hank swooshes his cape, some fans are gonna say, "Oh yeah, we read there was a typhoon down by New Zealand." They put a little too much into it, but that's fine with us.

Todd: How is life "a sexually transmitted disease"?

Happy Tom: That's what it is.

Todd: How so?

Hank: That's how it starts.

Happy Tom: That's how it's transferred.

Hank: Life and AIDS starts and spreads the same way.

Happy Tom: Very easily.

Hank: And the result is always the same: death.

Todd: It's kind of dark.

Hank: It's poetic. We didn't say that the disease in itself is bad. *Hinsides gode og slem.*

Happy Tom: Beyond good and evil. (Providing the English to Norwegian translation.)

Todd: There's Turbonegro slip mats for record players, there's...

Happy Tom: Alarm clocks.

Todd: Is there perfume?

Hank and Happy Tom: We're making one.

Hank: It's called Hank.

Todd: Have you ever thought of making the dildo?

Hank: No, we're not actually that into sex toys and S&M games, S&M fashion. We're into...

Happy Tom: Meat and potatoes.

Hank: Meat and potato sex, but infrastructure gayness. Industrial homosexuality.

Todd: As a concept.

Hank: The construction worker means a lot to us.

Todd: Gotcha.

Hank: The gay redneck. Garth Brooks, man.

Todd: You're the Norwegian Garth Brooks?

Hank: Yeah!

Todd: Okay, this is a foreign concept for Americans: How does a band get sponsored by the government and given a grant?

Hank: All bands are in Norway.

Happy Tom: We're probably the least sponsored band, us and the black metal guys. We never got anything. It's part of this branding of nation. They give you money to go tour abroad, because it's the spreading of culture. They want Norway to be represented by like, Aryans. And then black metal and us. It's like, "Fuck these guys. They're not getting anything."

Todd: Is it true that you had a tour that fell through in Berlin?

Happy Tom: We asked for sixty thousand dollars once to go to Japan. It was almost a joke and they gave us five thousand bucks, so we just went down to Hamburg and drank it all.

Todd: Did you get receipts or anything?

Happy Tom: Yeah, we got all the receipts

from this is one pub: "rental of guitar amplifier." Every little thing was from, like, Hanse Bierre Kelugan.

Todd: That's great.

Happy Tom: We handed these receipts in like [mischievous voice], "Here you go."

Hank: That's the cultural politics of a country with a mixed economy. They support some cultural brands. They try to.

Todd: At least they give it some effort. As opposed to America, there's nothing.

Hank: And that's kind of sad, too.

Happy Tom: I don't know. I actually think the cultural side of the market is one of the best things about capitalism. In Norway, there's so much state-sponsored culture that's only there to reproduce so that people who used to give out film grants end up giving film grants their own children, who then sit on the committee to give film grants to their children. They never make any good films. I mean, Spielberg and Scorsese, they're not from Norway. How many of these government-sponsored bands are any good?

Todd: Doing an independent magazine, no one gives us free money. It's really scratch and claw.

Happy Tom: Yeah, I've been in bands for twenty-two years, and we never got any. We got that money once and we drank it up, but if people love what they do, they should just do it and not expect working people to support them.

Hank: You can also see it in some left-wing, or artist, upper-class artist slumming – when they come with their criticism against the right wing in Norway, they say, "I'm opposing the right wing because I'm a ceramist: that's the explanation."

Todd: That doesn't hold a lot of water.

Happy Tom: "I don't support the

pocket.

Todd: Have any Turbonegro prophecies come true?

Hank: Well, the "Grunge Whore" prophecy. The "Grunge Whore" song, we wrote that two years prior to Kurt Cobain's death, and look at the lyrics.

Happy Tom: You know, looking back at it, I think it's kind of sad because I think he was a really sweet guy. What we really thought was kind of stupid about Nirvana, at the time, was that instead of accepting that they were a mainstream band, they brought in Steve Albini and tried to make an alternative record with *In Utero*. Cobain said stuff like, "I don't want to play for the people who used to beat me up in school." I think you *should* play for the people who beat you up in school. I think, in retrospect, that he was a very talented and sweet person. I can't say that about his wife. I think it was very sad and I think he could make some really amazing stuff through the rest of his life.

Todd: Levi's is a smart company and

Todd: Fuck.

Happy Tom: So, we went to Levi's and said, "Give us some jackets." 'Cause they were already sponsoring, giving away – you know the way corporations try to get into the "in" scene by giving clothes to the cool peo-



*We're taking darkness back from the art lofts
and out into suburbia again.*

-Happy Tom

Republicans because I'm a painter."

Todd: It doesn't make any sense.

Hank: It doesn't make any sense. We know what they mean, because they would take away my government support and I would have to sell instead of just sitting in my own cocoon.

Todd: Do you think someone like (Edward) Munch would be a product of that society?

Happy Tom: What you have to remember is that a lot of big artists were in some rich guy's pocket. Black Flag and Charles Bukowski were never in some rich guy's

they have to get something from you. What do they get from Turbonegro from sponsoring you?

Happy Tom: The band.

Todd: A band, just...

Happy Tom: You know, we say that we're sponsored by Levi's, but we're actually sponsored by the local Scandinavian office. I don't think people in San Francisco know what they're up to, and it's not like some big global strategy. We started doing denim – we went out and bought it in Norway. It cost two hundred bucks for a jacket.

ple? They've been doing it for years in Norway. So, we said, "Stop giving it to those fucking trendy idiots. Give it to us. We're actually wearing the shit on stage." They're like, "Uhhhh, okay. Here's a jacket." We just started hassling them, "Hey, give us some more." "Okay, we'll give you some more." Then, eventually, some friends of ours got hired there and it's just this dirty little corrupt thing. And these German guys got in touch with Levi's Germany after a while. It's not a big deal, but then they gave us

Forged Documents, Presidential Lies, and a Great Big Bloody Oil Field.

An Interview with Congressman Henry Waxman

Interview by Sean Carswell

Photos by Todd Taylor

It's the biggest scandal of our lifetime, and no one seems to know about it. The short version goes like this: George W. Bush based his argument for a "pre-emptive" war on forged documents. The CIA claims they told Bush that the documents were forgeries. Nonetheless, Bush mentioned the forgeries as facts in his State of the Union address. Six weeks later, the US invaded Iraq. Shortly after the war began, a US oil company started pumping, selling, and making a profit off of oil in Iraq. That company is Halliburton. Vice President Dick Cheney was the CEO of Halliburton up until a few months prior to becoming Vice President of the US. The US Army Corps of Engineers gave Halliburton a no-bid¹ contract to pump this oil *before* the US invaded Iraq.

Henry Waxman, a Democratic congressman from California, looked into these forged documents and no-bid contracts and started to question these dealings of the Bush administration. The implications are huge. Could Bush have lied to the nation, led that nation into a war based upon that lie, won the world's second largest oil reserve as a spoil of that war, then handed the oil reserve over to his buddies? Well, all the evidence isn't in just yet, but, judging on what we know from Army contracts and CIA statements, it's starting to look like this is the case. So when Congressman Waxman made this information public, it should've been the next big story that the press latched onto. This is bigger than OJ, bigger than Jon Benet Ramsey, bigger than a presidential blow job, bigger than Watergate. Yet, when Congressman Waxman made all of this information public, the press largely ignored it. It popped up in a couple of *New York Times* editorials. The *Washington Post* mentioned it at the end of an article on page B 14. To their credit, the *Los Angeles Times* did follow the story. But, as a whole, this giant scandal is being ignored. I wouldn't have even known about it if I hadn't happened to read an article on it in a British newspaper called *The Guardian*.

It makes me angry that the US media is completely ignoring this story, so I thought to myself, hell, *Razorcake* is the media. If I want this story to be covered, I should cover it. I called up Congressman Waxman's office and, through the help of a really nice congressional staffer named Lisa, I set up an interview with Congressman Waxman. We met up at a park dedication in Malibu where, surrounded by a canyon, horses, hikers, and park rangers, Congressman Waxman and I talked about war and scandals.

Sean: Can you explain to me about the documents that allegedly proved that Iraq tried to obtain uranium from Niger?

Rep. Waxman: We heard most prominently about these documents when the president, in his State of the Union address, referred to the fact that he had found out that Iraq was trying to import uranium from Niger, which is a country in Africa. He said that it showed their intent to become a nuclear power.² This was the most powerful argument that the administration made as a reason to go to war against Saddam Hussein. I remember the imagery so well when they said that, if we waited without know-

ing how militarized Hussein had become, a smoking gun might be a nuclear cloud. It turned out, however, that the evidence of the attempt by Iraq to import uranium was based on forged documents. It was all a hoax. What we later found out was that the CIA knew it was a hoax. I wrote to President Bush right before the war started and asked him, "How could this have taken place?" I know that the State of the Union address is one of the most heavily vetted speeches. Every fact is checked very carefully by people in the administration. So I couldn't understand how he could make this statement. I still don't understand how he could make this statement, because, if the intelligence agency knew it was a hoax, did they not tell him? This would show massive incompetence. Or, if they told the administration, then Bush said something that his intelligence people knew to be false, which could only be explained by saying that he was trying to scare people. I haven't gotten an adequate explanation even to this day. Condoleezza Rice, the national security advisor for the president, said, "The CIA never told me." But people from the CIA said they did. It's hard to believe that the CIA didn't tell them.

Sean: Prior to the war, didn't Dick Cheney or Colin Powell set up offices in the CIA to investigate these weapons?

Rep. Waxman: The vice president, from all I've heard, was very involved in the intelligence gathering about Iraq. There was an American ambassador who was assigned to go to Niger to find out the accuracy of these claims. The reports all came back from everyone who had anything to do with it, that the documents were forgeries. The documents referred to people who were in the government in Niger ten years earlier than the documents were dated.³ So they were clearly forged documents. The whole idea that Iraq was importing uranium from Niger was a hoax. It should not have been used by the president or by the State Department or by our government when addressing the UN as a reason why Saddam Hussein was in violation of the resolution.

Sean: The US Department of State gave a fact sheet to Congress on December 19, 2002 that regarded Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. According to this fact sheet, weren't these documents (which later turned out to be forgeries) the only indication that Iraq had nuclear intentions?

Rep. Waxman: I don't have that document in front of me, but I know in December the State Department did make this argument. I don't want to say it was the only argument. There was another piece of evidence that was used by the administration that might not have been in this document. There were some tubes that were presented to people in the Congress, in very secure surroundings with top secret classification. We were told that these tubes were going to be used for nuclear devices. We didn't know until later that there was a conflict among the experts, and most of the experts thought that those tubes were really for other purposes, not for nuclear purposes. In December, the State Department did make the same assertion that the President made later in the State of the Union address.

Sean: Did these documents and tubes affect the way that you voted for the war in Iraq, on whether or not to invade?⁴

Rep. Waxman: I can't say that the documents, per se, influenced me. But certainly the argument that Iraq could become a nuclear power had a great deal of influence on my thinking. You really

can't wait until Saddam Hussein developed nuclear weapons because the impact of those nuclear weapons could allow him to blackmail all the countries in his region. It also could mean that, if we were forced to deal with him militarily, our dealings would become very complicated. So that was an important fact. People talk about weapons of mass destruction a lot, but they're lumping together chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. Chemical and biological are serious weapons, but so are conventional weapons. In many cases, conventional weapons can do as much harm as those other two. Chemical and biological weapons are also unreliable. But they're weapons for terrorists. They can scare people. They can panic a population. But nuclear weapons can destroy large numbers of people, so they are really the weapons of mass destruction that I fear the most.

Sean: So, if there have been no substantial chemical or biological weapons found in Iraq, and if the documents proving the nuclear intentions were forgeries, how exactly did Iraq pose an immediate threat to the US?

Rep. Waxman: I don't think Iraq did pose an immediate threat to the US. Iraq posed a threat if they became nuclear. That is a threat that our administration argued as maybe not an immediate threat where they're pointing weapons at us, but it could be one that would change our ability to deal with them militarily. What I thought was a strong argument was that the UN had agreed with Saddam Hussein that Iraq would become demilitarized. Saddam Hussein was not cooperating. So I thought there was a good reason for the UN to insist on its own resolutions to be enforced. That's why I thought we should've waited for the UN to continue their inspections and see if anything developed rather than to rush into war. The idea of a preemptive, unilateral action by the United States, and the doctrine that allows us to do that, is a very dangerous one, and one I strongly reject. It's a signal to other countries that they can do the same thing. It's a green light to India and Pakistan to go to war. It's a signal to other places where there is friction to go to war rather than look for an alternative means to resolve their disputes. It justifies a country to move militarily on the basis that they're preempting an attack that may never even happen. I reject that argument. The idea that this administration has used that argument is something that's very troubling.

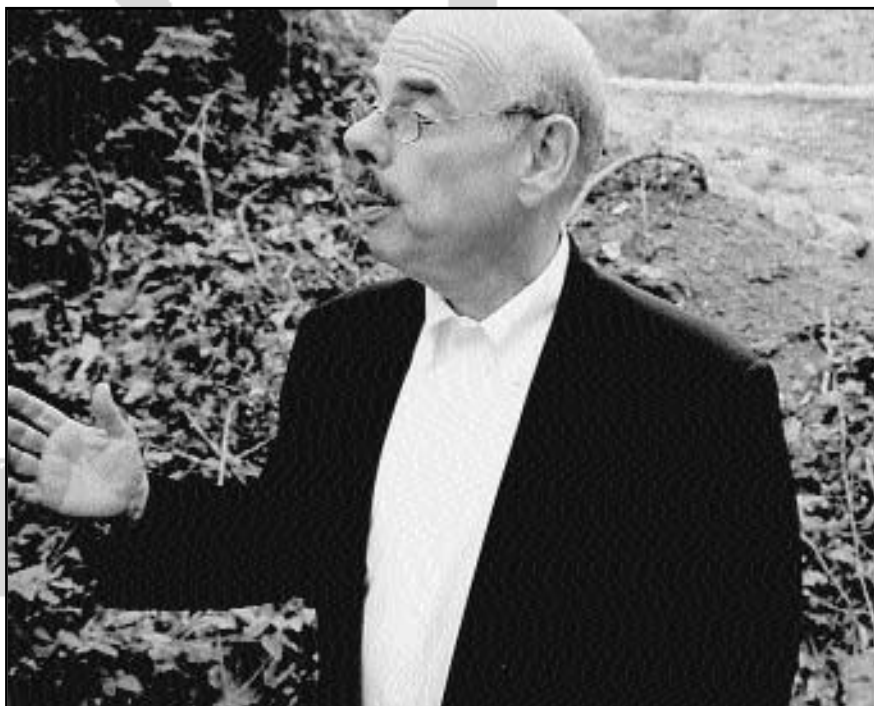
Sean: Is it true that Halliburton, the company that still pays Dick Cheney an annual salary as part of his retirement benefits, is currently pumping oil in Iraq?

Rep. Waxman: Halliburton, which is the company with which Vice President Cheney made his millions as a chief executive officer before he was elected, and from whom he still gets something like \$160,000 a year, was given a contract by the military. We were first told that the contract was for a very limited purpose. They were given a contract to stop oil well fires, if there was a problem like that, should a war take place in Iraq. They were given this contract without the opportunity for any other company to bid. It was a no-bid contract. They were also to be paid on a cost-plus basis, which is an encouragement for them to increase their costs. This is in spite of the fact that Halliburton had a record of inflating their costs in other government contracts to the point where they were facing possible criminal charges. They settled this case by paying two million dollars to the government for overcharges. And here they were given this new contract, which is a very peculiar contract. A no-bid, cost-plus contract. And they had a record of over-inflating their costs, but they also had a record of doing business in Iraq – when Saddam Hussein was in power – also in Libya and Iran. All of these countries have been singled out as countries involved with terrorists. So it struck me as very questionable why Halliburton should be given any kind of contract. I found out later, in the course of my investigation into the matter, that it wasn't just a short term contract to stop oil well fires. It was also a contract with a two-year period, maximum seven billion dollars, to run the oil industry in Iraq. When I started to question the Army Corps of Engineers – who wrote the contract – why they didn't have competitive bidding, they came back and said that they were going to give the contract out for competitive bidding. They were going to do that in August of this year. Now they're telling me that they might not do it until October. And it may well be that Halliburton will get the contract because they're the ones already on the ground. In effect, though, they have a contract to run the oil industry in Iraq. That's a strange notion when the president has said, over and over again, that the oil in Iraq belongs to the Iraqi people, and now Halliburton is in charge.

Sean: If the US invaded Iraq based on false information and forged documents, and if, prior to the war, the vice president's oil company got a contract to run the oil industry in Iraq, why isn't this front page news?

Rep. Waxman: To give the administration their due, they'd argue that the uranium and the possible nuclear weapons weren't the only reasons for the war, that Saddam Hussein was a tyrant. He killed his own people. He refused to disarm. He was in violation of the UN

In effect, though, they have a contract to run the oil industry in Iraq. That's a strange notion when the president has said, over and over again, that the oil in Iraq belongs to the Iraqi people, and now Halliburton is in charge.



resolution. So the administration would argue that there were broader reasons for the war. But we were not able to convince most of the international community and some of our closest allies to do this. We've been acting alone – with the British and a few other countries, but without most of our allies who've been part of the structure that we've been part of through the UN and NATO since World War II ended. This puts the United States in a very precarious position. The Halliburton contract is troubling. And I don't want us to get too far ahead of the facts. We're still trying to get all the facts about these issues. But I think it gives the appearance of Halliburton being overpaid for a contract. This is another way to reward a corporation that's close to this administration by shifting taxpayers' dollars to them when they're not really doing the job. And those are taxpayers' dollars that shouldn't be wasted on anybody. They shouldn't be wasted on Halliburton or any other corporation.⁵

Sean: Going back to what you said about giving the current administration their due, if you're going to set a precedent that states it's okay to have a preemptive war against countries that have leaders who we feel are tyrants, or who are refusing to abide by UN resolutions, doesn't that open us up to invading a whole lot of countries right now?

Rep. Waxman: One would think so.

Sean: Where does it stop? Where do you draw the line?

Rep. Waxman: It's very hard to know. All of the arguments we made about Iraq are certainly true of North Korea, because they have nuclear weapons. The involvement with terrorists and the development of chemical weapons is true of Syria and Iran. It's also true of some countries that are our allies, like Egypt and other countries. I don't know what the military arsenal is of the Saudis, but if they had chemical or biological weapons, do we go ahead and use that as a pretext to invade them? Do we have a responsibility to invade any country on this basis? That's why we've put ourselves in a very untenable position. We've isolated ourselves from the rest of the world. We've weakened our ability within the world community to weed out terrorists and to try to break down the breeding ground for terrorists.

Sean: Going back to the question of the forged documents, obviously the CIA knew and the president may have known. Is there any possibility of a public, non-partisan investigation of the president for this? Certainly, if we can have one for, say, a blow job, we could have one over how much he knew in the State of the Union address.

Rep. Waxman: I think it's important to have an investigation. I'm amazed when I look at the fact that the Republicans who control the Congress are so uninterested in doing any investigation with any subject on this administration. I can see that the Republicans have loyalty to a Republican president, but Congress has an institutional role to play, and oversight is one of the most important responsibilities. It's part of the checks and balances in our government that

keep everybody honest. We are, in effect, in a situation where we have a parliamentary sort of government, where Congress just takes its orders from the Bush administration rather than play an independent role. The intelligence committees in the House and the Senate are investigating these very same matters. I'm watching very carefully how they're doing their job. It's likely that we're going to need to have some independent commission do the job. The intelligence committee is still a Republican-dominated committee. If they don't do their job because they're worried about embarrassing a Republican president, the people of this country lose out on their right to know what happened and what role the president and others played.

Sean: Since you've been coming out with this information, how much help have you gotten from Congress?

Rep. Waxman: Many members have been amazed at the information I've been giving out. They've been very supportive. But those who are in power in Congress have shown very little interest at all in what I think are pretty startling facts. From what we know now, the facts indicate that the intelligence agency knew that the argument that Iraq was trying to get uranium from Africa was false. They knew it was false. The president made that statement in his State of the Union address. Condoleezza Rice claims that that speech was very carefully reviewed by the intelligence people and they gave a go-ahead to it. I point out that the way the president said it in his State of the Union address was that "we understand from the British that Saddam Hussein was trying to import uranium from Africa." Now, if they look at it as a correct statement that the British made this comment, that would be a very deceptive thing to do. They certainly knew that the subject matter of what he was claiming was not true. From the facts we know now, we need to have a real investigation that's going to get to all the facts.

Sean: The British Parliament is actually coming down pretty hard on (British Prime Minister) Tony Blair right now...

Rep. Waxman: The British Parliament actually is a parliamentary system, but they're having a genuine investigation of the claims Blair has made. The British have put out a couple of dossiers on their intelligence findings about Iraq. They repeated the same statement about the importation of uranium from Africa by Saddam Hussein. When I wrote to the president, I got an answer from somebody in the State Department saying that they knew it

was a hoax, but they thought that, since the claims were being made by other countries, and by that I assume they meant Britain, that maybe there was some validity to it. When they found out that these countries were relying on the same basic documents, they realized it wasn't an accurate statement. But they insisted in their letter that they acted in good faith. It's hard for me to see quite how that all fits together.⁶

The idea of a preemptive, unilateral action by the United States, and the doctrine that allows us to do that, is a very dangerous one, and one I strongly reject.



Sean: Since you've made this public, how much press have you gotten?

Rep. Waxman: Well, the interesting thing to me is that, when I first made this information public – that the CIA knew in advance of the president's State of the Union address, that the information he was relating was false – it was right before the war. In fact, the letter we wrote to the president was sent to him a couple of days before the war began. I was amazed that there was very little press attention. Perhaps the press felt that we were in the war, and what difference did it make how we got into it? We were in it. No matter

I don't think Iraq did pose an immediate threat to the US.

whether or not they find chemical weapons or something else in Iraq, it's still important that we have a clear explanation of the statements that were made by the president of the United States that led this country into war. The fact that Saddam Hussein was a bad guy, and it may have turned out to be a blessing for the people of Iraq that he's no longer in power, justifies the war based on arguments that are not candid. We do know, whether we find weapons of mass destruction or not, that some of the suggestions of our intelligence people that Iraqis were ready to hit our troops with chemical weapons, that never happened. We do seem to find out that the stockpiled weapons we expected to find are not obviously there. They may be somewhere hidden, but so far, no one's found them. So the intelligence was inaccurate in many respects. The president's statements were at odds with what his intelligence people knew. So we need a full explanation.

Sean: When I was doing research before interviewing you, I looked and the *New York Times* had only two brief mentions of you and this issue in it. The *Washington Post* had one mention buried in the back of the second section. Have any major media outlets contacted you about the forged documents or Halliburton pumping oil in Iraq?

Rep. Waxman: I've had some interviews with some reporters. They've moved on to other issues. I don't understand why this isn't a bigger story. For the longest time, we couldn't get them to focus on this issue at all. Now that so many months have gone by and we haven't found weapons of mass destruction, they're forced to look at that issue. But, otherwise, the press has not – with some exceptions – given this the attention it deserves.

Sean: Do you have any theories as to why?

Rep. Waxman: No.

NOTES:

1. A "no-bid contract" is a contract given out by a government agency for public work in which only one company is considered for the job, and that company is not required to give a price ahead of time. Usually no-bid contracts come with a cap – the maximum amount of money a company can charge for the job. In this case, Halliburton's cap is \$7 billion.

2. Bush's exact words in the State of the Union address were "The International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed in the 1990s that Saddam Hussein had an advanced nuclear weapons development program, had a design for a nuclear weapon and was working on five different methods of enriching uranium for a bomb."

"The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa."

However, Bush failed to mention that the IAEA left Iraq in 1998 and had not done any significant inspection of Iraq after that, so that information was five years old. Also, of course, the information that the British government had was the same information that the CIA had, and everyone knew it was false. Good places to look for this information are <http://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/01/28/sotu.transcript/> to read the transcript of the State of the Union address and <http://www.iaea.org/worldatom/> to read the IAEA's actual information.

3. According to the *Washington Post*, "One of the documents was a letter, dated July 2000 and apparently signed by the Niger president, discussing Iraq's agreement to purchase 500 tons of uranium oxide, and certifying that



it was authorized under the Niger constitution of 1965. But U.N. officials quickly noted that Niger had promulgated a new constitution in 1999, and that the letter's signature bore little resemblance to the actual signature of President Tandja Mamadou.

"Another letter, dated in 1999, was signed by the Niger foreign minister. But the letterhead belonged to the military government that had been replaced earlier in 1999, and the signatory had left the job of foreign minister in 1989."

<<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A9011-2003Mar22>>

4. Congressman Waxman voted in favor of the war. To read his statement regarding this, go to:

<<http://www.house.gov/waxman/issues/foreignaffairs/iraq.htm>>

5. According to *Rueters* (the world's largest international news agency) on June 20, 2003, "A unit of Halliburton Co., the Texas oil giant once led by Vice President Dick Cheney, has received more than \$800 million in work orders in Iraq so far."

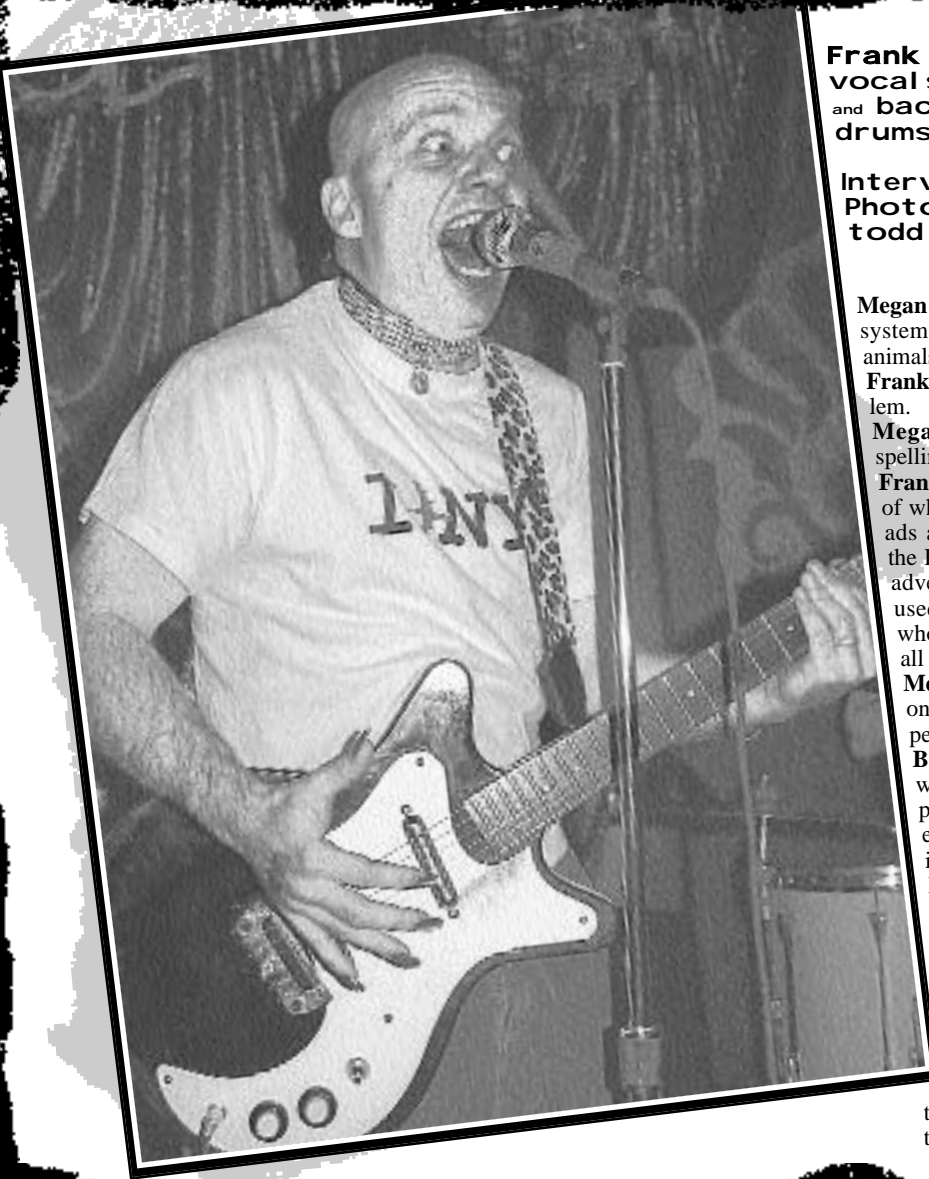
6. According to *The Guardian*, "Senior figures in the intelligence community and across Whitehall briefed the former international development secretary Clare Short that Tony Blair had made a secret agreement last summer with George Bush to invade Iraq in February or March, she claimed yesterday."

<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/guardianpolitics/story/0,3605,979650,00.html>>

FRANK DISCUSSION HAS MATURED. BEFORE YOU START PICTURING HIM WITH A CANE AND SMOKING JACKET, LET ME SET YOU STRAIGHT. THINK ABOUT GRADE SCHOOL. REMEMBER THAT TIME AROUND FOURTH GRADE WHEN THE GIRLS STOPPED HITTING ON THE PLAYGROUND? EVERYONE SAID THAT THE GIRLS STOPPED BECAUSE THEY MATURE FASTER THAN BOYS DO. THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF IT. ON THE SURFACE THEY GREW OUT OF IT, MOVED ON. WHAT I KNOW, AND MOST ANY OTHER GIRL KNOWS, IS THAT THE AGGRESSION DIDN'T DISAPPEAR, IT PROGRESSED. THE AGGRESSION TOOK ON A LESS TANGIBLE FORM, HAD MORE THOUGHT BEHIND IT, AND, IN THE LONG RUN, WAS MORE VICIOUS AND FAR-REACHING THAN A SOCK TO THE HEAD. INSTEAD OF A BLOODY NOSE, YOU ENDED UP WITH A BAD REPUTATION THAT FOLLOWED YOU THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL.

THE SAME PROGRESSION CAN BE SEEN IN FRANK. THERE WERE NO ANIMALS ON STAGE, NO SHOTS FIRED AT THE AUDIENCE, NOTHING AS OVERT AS THAT. SURE, HE'S STILL IMMEDIATELY PROVOCATIVE (HE HAMMERED A NAIL INTO HIS NASAL CAVITY THE NIGHT I SAW THEM), BUT WE TALKED A LOT ABOUT COMPUTER HACKING. A SUBTLE WAY TO BE EXTREMELY DESTRUCTIVE WITHOUT IMMEDIATELY CALLING ATTENTION TO ONESELF.

"BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MUSIC?" YOU ASK. I HAD HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND THEY MORE THAN MET THEM. VANDALISM. BEAUTIFUL AS A ROCK IN A COP'S FACE IS A PERFECT BALANCE OF ELEMENTS FROM TEACHERS IN SPACE AND EVER FEEL LIKE KILLING YOUR BOSS? LIVE, THEY'RE INCREDIBLE. ANYONE WHO'S SEEN THEM ALWAYS SAYS THE SAME THING, "DID YOU WATCH HOW FRANK PLAYS?" HE PLAYS HIGH ON THE NECK WITH LONG NAILS IN PLACE OF A PICK. OH YEAH, AND HE PLAYS FAST. DENMARK IS ONE HELL OF A BASS PLAYER. HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S POSSESSED WHILE PLAYING. BEN'S KIT IS SO BIG, YOU CAN BARELY SEE HIM BEHIND IT, BUT HE KNOWS HOW TO WORK THAT SET-UP. THEY'RE POWERFUL, FRENETIC, AND SPOT-ON. ONE THING BECAME APPARENT. THE FEEDERZ HAVE CHANGED THEIR AGGRESSION. THEY'RE MORE DANGEROUS THAN EVER. MOTHERS HIDE YOUR KIDDIES. HERE COME THE FEEDERZ.



Frank Discussion - guitar and
vocal s **Denmark Vesey** - bass
and backing vocal s **Ben Wah** -
drums and backing vocal s

Interview by Megan Pants
Photos by Megan Pants and
todd Taylor

Megan: Do you have a really good immune system? I mean, handling all of those dead animals – a lot of people would get sick.

Frank: I was born sick, so that's not a problem.

Megan: Is there any significance to the spelling of Feederz?

Frank: Actually, a lot of ads use Zs. A lot of what we've always done is turn shit like ads against themselves. In a lot of ways, the Feederz are an advertisement, a negative advertisement. So we jumped in and we used Feederz because it was part of the whole sickness and we just swallowed it all up.

Megan: Ben, I overheard you say you're on the injured list right now, what happened?

Ben: I broke my wrist a couple times when I was a kid. Every time I have to play drums successively for days on end and put a little too much oomph into it, it'll start bothering me. Nothing I can't handle.

Megan: How'd you break your wrist?

Ben: Being stupid. Your typical punk rock stuff.

Megan: Frank, with the letter prank, do you know if any kids actually ever submitted any essays to that? (Frank wrote a letter on school letterhead. Thousands were distributed to students in school. It basically stated that they were just training to be

drones. The format was that it was a contest in which the students could submit essays for a cash prize. The letter is on the Feederz site and is worth checking out.)

Frank: No. What happened is that they said on the news that it had happened and that was how the scandal broke open, because some people actually bought it. Essentially, what occurred was that I printed up about five thousand. Actually, this guy I knew, his parents, one of them had been an anarchist dockworker in San Francisco, so we got along famously. I actually got along better with the dad than with the kid. I told him what I was planning and he said, "We'll take

the thought that slaves were passive and there was no resistance. It was pretty well planned and if some of the people hadn't opened their mouths – actually Denmark Vesey had made rules saying, "Don't talk to these people, don't talk to house slaves." – because they had a tendency to get Stockholm syndrome.

Megan: Where they end up with loyalty and go back.

Frank: Right, loyalty to their captors. And that's exactly what happened. They turned them in. So, they found out about it before it could fully come into place, which is truly sad. Denmark Vesey, just wiped off the

Megan: Another Phoenix band, too. The only one I'd heard was a metal band had covered "Jesus" and had gotten the copyright for it, but...

Frank: I'd never heard that.

Megan: ...I only found one source that said it, so I don't really know. In '97, the *Phoenix New Times* said that the last sighting of you had been in *People Magazine* as part of a Bay area wax dripping cult. What is that about?

Frank: That whole thing – that's how the *New Times* in Phoenix writes. They like to say things in odd ways. Some people invited me to a party and it was one of

FEEDERZ

care of it." They walked in there, older folks, and said, "We need to do this." Printed them right up and got kids to hand them to their teachers. I got several reports that teachers actually read them and then passed them out. I guess they thought, "They're being a bit obvious here, but..." It sounded official, so they went ahead. The next thing I knew it was on the news and people were whining about "What's this going to do to valid scholarships?" and all that shit. Then they said that the police are investigating it and I knew, well, this is Phoenix, and it's going to take them about ten seconds to figure out who the hell it was. So, I hid in the Mormon part of town in Mesa, Arizona for three days until I got a plane out of there and that's how I ended up in the Bay area.

Megan: I had always heard it was the gun incident. (Frank had opened fire on the audience with blanks.)

Frank: At our first show? No, we played a bunch of shows after that.

Megan: Denmark Vesey isn't an arbitrary name, why did you pick it?

Denmark: Well, Denmark Vesey was a man known to fuck shit up back in the day. Are you familiar with Denmark Vesey?

Megan: Yeah, but tell the story anyway.

Denmark: Well, Frank?

Frank: I'm the one who turned him on to Denmark Vesey.

Denmark: I think Frank would be better to eloquate it than I.

Frank: Well, essentially, Denmark Vesey planned, and almost pulled off, an insurrection in Charleston (South Carolina). A slave revolt that would've burned down Charleston. It involved up to about seven thousand slaves, which puts the whole lie to

map. You never hear about Denmark Vesey.

Megan: Did you hear about how he won his freedom?

Frank: Through the lottery!

Megan: Fifteen hundred dollars!

Frank: You know, how I found out about Denmark Vesey in the first place was through a quote of his. At one point, I think he was in a pub, and he was getting after this guy because he was sucking up to the slave owners. He was giving him a bunch of shit for it. The guy says, "Well, what am I sup-

posed to do? I'm just a slave." and Denmark Vesey turned to him and said, "Some of us deserve to be."

Megan: Nice.

Frank: And that sort of attitude definitely is not too politically correct or leftist, but it's absolutely on the money. Those are the choices we all have to make.

Megan: In "Aborted Jesus" what is a "D&C messiah"?

Frank: Well, you know what a D&C is, right?

Megan: No.

Frank: It's a suck and scrape, an abortion. I think it's dilate and curate.

Megan: Has anyone tried to, or actually gotten a, copyright on any of the anti-copywritten material you've made?

Frank: Yes. "Fuck You" ended up being copyrighted by Kirk Kirkwood of the Meat Puppets. Yeah, they did a cover of it and copyrighted it.

Ben: I just finished the collected stories of Phillip K. Dick and I'm just about three or four stories deep into *Wake Up Screaming* by H.P. Lovecraft.

Megan: You've played with Bloodhag. Did that influence the focus on science

IF YOU AREN'T IN A FEW FBI FILES, YOU HAVEN'T LIVED

fiction at all?

Ben: Those guys are good friends of mine.

Frank: Actually, if we're a part of any cult, it'd either be a Mothra cult – I actually put out a web page at one point about a Mothra Gihad – or maybe Cuthulu. We like tentacle porn. Ever see *Daegon*?

[pause, looking at Megan for response]

Ben: You're thinking about it.

Megan: Not that I can remember.

Frank: It's so funny. You see this girl and she's all, "Kill me! Kill me!" after she gets dropped in to mate with these Daegon.

Megan: Tentacles – I don't work with that at all. I'm freaked out by octopi. Did Henry Rollins really beat you up after you nailed the rat to the stage?

Frank: Fuck no!

Megan: It's in his book. (*Get in the Van*)

Ben: It doesn't say that.

Megan: He said he hit the cage.

Ben: He threw the cage.

Frank: Phlebbbbbt. That is utter fucking bullshit. Actually, I had to be reminded of it because I didn't have a clue...

Denmark: Too many of those steroids are going into his head.

Megan: Or into his neck.

Frank: Ron, this guy who was there that night, had to remind me. He told me, "Don't you remember. He came backstage and he started whining about the rat?" And I go, "You mean that little whiny creature?" Because I didn't know who the fuck he was. So, all of a sudden, you've got this situa-

tion where this guy's whining, going, "You killed the rat." And I just go, "Glad you liked the show." Then he came over to the house where we were at and I had a boa constrictor. I took the rat and gave it to the boa constrictor afterwards. He was telling me about how cool it was that I had the boa constrictor and shit and then he fucking wanks the shit in the book.

Ben: What I find curious is that he has no neck now, but he still tries to talk out of it.

Megan: How did you end up being a tester at Microsoft? The only people I know who have gotten positions like that were caught doing some sneaky shit and then got hired.

Frank: No, actually, I stumbled into the job. It's kind of funny because one thing that they found, and I found, was that I had a knack for breaking things. So, that turned out to be an advantage. In a sense, Microsoft ended up paying me – well, in the end – right around twenty-five dollars an hour to learn hacking skills and help them bring about open source, because you have access to the source code... make a few copies...

Megan: Send them out to the right people.

Frank: Yeppers.

Megan: Have you ever been involved with 2600? (a print and online magazine about hacking)

Frank: What do mean by involved with 2600?

Megan: Done or followed anything that they've been involved in.

Frank: Definitely very familiar with 2600, but as far as going to the Friday meetings or anything, I haven't done that. Actually, there's a newsgroup, alt.2600, and there's another newsgroup, alt.hackers.malicious (a.h.m.). Those are a little more...

Megan: Devious.

Frank: Well

yeah, even though I definitely read a lot on alt.2600, most of the time you'll find my posts on a.h.m. Matter of fact, "Owned" became voted...

Megan: They took it as their anthem. I saw that. There was another group, a smaller alt.hackers one that had adopted it as well. What are some of the best hacks or pranks you've heard about lately?

Frank: Actually the most fun one is probably Evil Angelica.

Megan: What's that?

Frank: Evil Angelica does defacements, but she's very creative about it. It's kind of funny because a lot of times defacements are looked down upon and a lot of times it's because they're done pretty stupidly. It's the equivalent of here you have a bright white painted wall and they put "Ted!" So, someone just putting, "This page owned by:" – all of the sudden you have this blank area that you can put anything in the world there. And it's just up to you to do it when you do these things. There's obviously a lot of levels to hack and there are more involved hacks, but there are hacks that people can do that aren't just stupid shit, that aren't that hard. You can be a "script kitty" and pull off something meaningful. And there's some good tools out there now. There's tools out there that automatically search for thoroughly up-to-date vulnerabilities. They just go through them, hit them, see if they can get the buffer overflow happening. And, of course, Windows is usually the common target, and that's only because they're so insecure. I mean, you can lock down NT or 2K, but you pretty much have to know what you're doing and then worry about patches, too.

Megan: Not to mention whatever browser you've got.

Frank: Yeah, you know, Internet Explorer is always good. You know, worse than the browser itself is the email app. (application)

Megan: Outlook.

Frank: Lookout. I call it lookout. What I love is when all the viruses start coming through and people start saying, "Oh, just turn off your windows script hosting." Starting with ME you're starting with a situation where you couldn't turn it off, you couldn't disable it, you couldn't even delete the sucker, because it automatically would drop it back in. People generally don't ask the simple questions. The simple question here is: when was the last time you ever received an email that was scripted from anyone you knew? The only people who are going to send you scripted emails are: A) spammers or B) viruses. I mean who else is gonna use scripts?

Megan: We just had this problem.

Frank: Now I'm on Unix.

Megan: We were on Mozilla, but we still had Explorer, so they were just fighting each other all the time. Now we run Opera.



Frank: Have you seen the Bork Opera?

Megan: No.

Frank: MSN would do a browser check. If a person had Opera, the MSN portal page was unreadable. It was funny. They went in and tested it and essentially took out the entrants for the browser name out of the registry, and all of the sudden, the page was fine. So what they did was they came out with a bork version, and it was the same Opera, except for if you go to msn.com, everything is like the Muppets. You know, "Bork, bork, bork, bork, bork."

Megan: How did you hook up with these two guys, or vice versa?

Frank: That's actually kind of cute. At one point...

[Denmark Vesey starts making blow job signs]

Megan: Wait, who's sucking whose dick over there?

Frank: Uh, okay. Meanwhile back at the pharmacy, I put something in the guestbook saying that I was looking for a bass player or a drummer. At one point, I had gotten a drummer and all of the sudden I couldn't get a hold of him.

Denmark: Shitting the bed.

Frank: Okay, that works. So, I put up the ad and apparently Denmark Vesey saw it and he emailed me because he knew Ben.

Denmark: I called Wah Ballys at work. I said, "I'm emailing the D right now." Then the next morning I woke up and there was a full fucking letter.

Frank: I said this is what we're going to need and if I haven't scared you off, send some tapes or something.

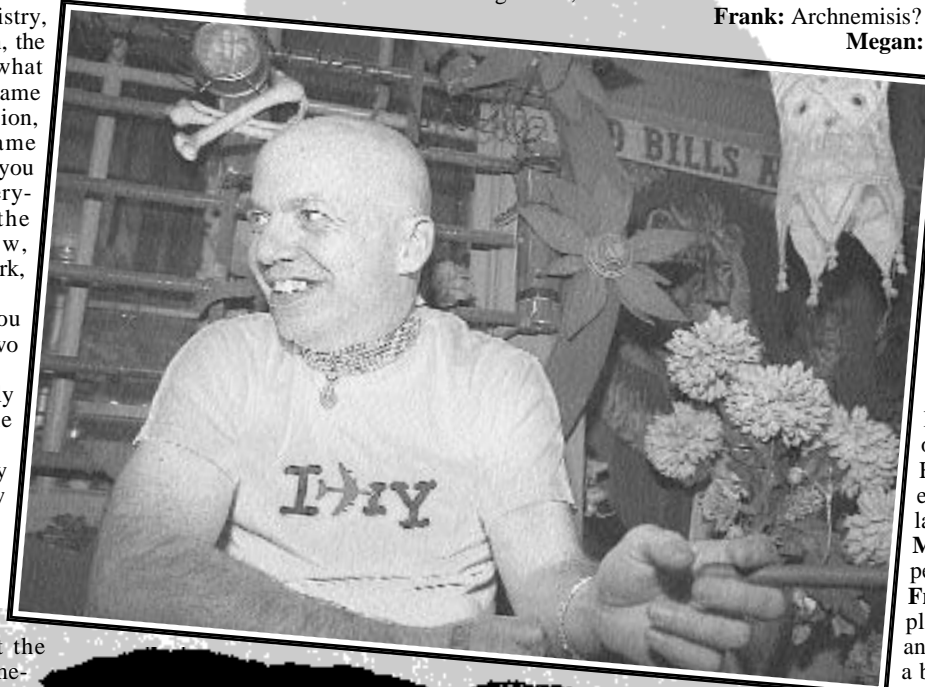
Ben: When Frank called, I had just had a particularly rough weekend and been down in Tacoma or Seatac at the casinos. I was pretty schnocky. My phone rings and I pick it up. The reception's kind of bad and I'm drunk and I just lost about a hundred dollars playing blackjack and eating some pretty bad prime rib. This voice goes, [gravelly Frank voice] "Ehhh yeah, this is Frank." And I think it's him [motions to Denmark] and I'm like, "Man I am really not in the mood for this right now."

Denmark: He thought I was goofin' off.

Ben: I thought he was puttin' me on, 'cause from the get-go it was too far-fetched. He's goin', "I emailed Frank and said it's you."

Denmark: Yeah, because I said, "Do you need a drummer? Please contact..." and I gave him your phone number. I didn't think he needed a bass player. I thought he just needed a drummer.

Frank: So, I go over and we play a little bit and the second time I go over, he'd been



WE LIKE TENTACLE PORN

talking about how it was hard with the way I play guitar, that it would be easier once we got a bass player. So the second time I go over, he's learned all the parts, particularly to the new material. I was like, "Well, that kind of settles that."

Denmark: And he turned to me and said, "Hey little boy, what are you doin' for the next coupla years." And then I got this weird yellow trickle running down my leg and into my shoe. Then we played "Mothra," probably.

Ben: Yeah, it was rough at first. I'm not a very good drummer, anyway. It's not the instrument that I started out with. It was kind of tough and I needed that and Denmark has been very enthusiastic. From the beginning I was just going, "Man, you've got to be kidding me. I don't have the chops. I don't have this, I don't have that." I was at a particularly low point at the time and not really wanting anything in particular to do with music after a slew of unsuccessful hardcore bands.

Denmark: So, we practiced our fuckin' asses off for five weeks and recorded the album, *Vandalism: Beautiful As a Rock in a*

Cop's Face, and hopefully the kids dig it.

Frank: See, that's the thing — skills can be learned. It's a lot harder to teach attitude.

Ben: That's true.

Megan: Do any of you have an archnemesis? It seems like Frank has had several short-term enemies.

Frank: Archnemesis?

Megan: Long term enemies, the grudge that's never gone away.

Frank: I guess in my case Henry Rollins has decided to be, but as far as arch enemy, no. He is obviously still a whiner and apparently not a good liar. And then, of course, I get the feeling that Jello Biafra is still not in love with me, but other than that... He'll probably be even less in love after last night.

Megan: What happened last night?

Frank: Well, we were playing at Gilman St. and someone made up a bunch of t-shirts saying, "Frank Discussion

stole my wife," with pictures of their wedding on it. At that very same show Theresa (Jello's ex-wife) sang with us.

Ben: It was a pretty rousing rendition of "Gut Rage."

Frank: It was so fucking beautiful. And Winston Smith (artist who did a lot of the art for the Dead Kennedys) was there. He got one of the shirts and he's giving it to Biafra. Life can be entertaining sometimes. Sometimes you can't plan how things work out. As a matter of fact, you were talking about hacking earlier. At one time, I made this fake CNN page, and it's a simple hack where you put what looks like a URL going along with the address. If you put an "at" sign (@), it doesn't read anything to the left of it, and just reads to the right. So, it can look like a regular CNN page when you put it out, but it only jumps to the end, so it was actually going to a page at feederz.com. It was supposedly that Bush was saying that he had proof of Iraqi deception and it included all this shit about how they had evidence that Saddam Hussein was trading suicide camels. That not only was he involved in 9/11, but that he had also been involved in the bombing of Pearl Harbor, just all this shit. Then, about two weeks later, I see in the regular news they were talking about, "Oh we have evidence that there was terrorist plans to attack Pearl Harbor." I go, "You know,

these fuckers, they don't even check their sources." And I'm laughing my ass off. I had no way of predicting of how things would unravel, or ravel, in their own way, just like last night.

Megan: What symbol would a Care Bear Punk have on its belly?

Ben: Razor blade. Safety pin.

Frank: Before or after?

Megan: Either.

Frank: Well, the bruises from the baseball bat. And, of course, you generally want to go for the head, 'cause then you can sell the skins. Virtually indistinguishable from baby seal fur.

Megan: A little more durable. What are some of the ways you've seen your artwork used? Anything completely out of context?

Frank: No, actually a lot of the stuff we do is kind of hard to take out of context.

Ben: "Jesus Entering from the Rear" for a Preparation H ad.

Megan: Time to destroy... unhappiness! Some of your old logos had Feederz Terrorist in it. Are you still using that?

Frank: Some logos had Feederz Terrorist, but we never used that. Actually, I think the Feederz Terrorist came from an old (Portland) *New Times Weekly* story in the early days. They just said Feederz and then terrorist because we were being investigated for being terrorists. I think *Search and Destroy* ended up taking the picture and putting terrorist in there, but it wasn't our logo. People have just incorporated it.

Megan: Have you ever seen your FBI file?

Frank: No. I just figure I could go through the hassle of going through the Freedom for Information Act, but, you know, why? I mean, first of all, there's probably information that wouldn't be in there, especially after the Patriot Act, and all that shit. Also, the way I look at it, if you aren't in a few files, you haven't lived.

Megan: Have you ever been physically threatened by any religious community?

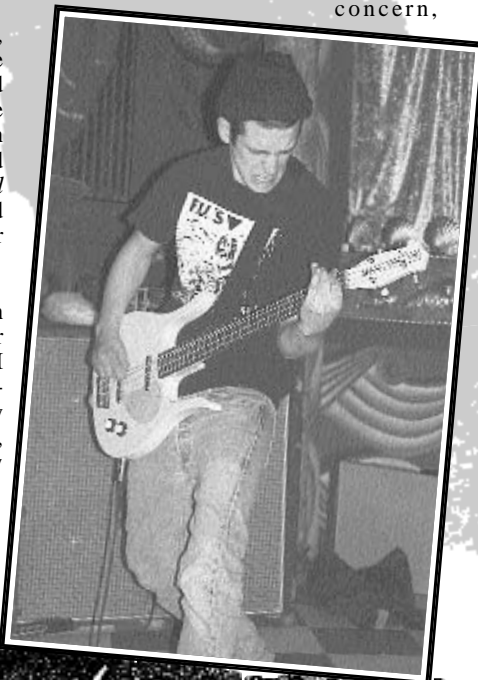
Frank: Actually, someone got on the guestbook and was really funny. I guess someone had gone on the Warped Tour and put out the lyrics to "Jesus." This person went to the Feederz site and said, "Well, you talk about Jesus, who died for your sins and everything. If you try to do that again, I've got baseball bats and shit and I'm gonna fuck you up!" I said, "Hey, if you like 'Jesus,' you're gonna love 'Aborted Jesus.' It's all about how, if Jesus had been aborted, you'd be fucking worshipping a puddle of chunks. I'm waiting for you to drop by at any time."

Megan: Who is Frank Moore and what is your connection to him?

Frank: Frank Moore! I met him at one point around Berkeley and we had talked a few times. He has got a great attitude, that

guy. He's cool. I told him what I was thinking of doing and he thought it was hilarious. So, we went up there and put him in the basket up at Gilman St. He sees the fun that can be involved in using the "shock value" and "guilt value." People go through all these changes, and you can have a lot of fun with that. It's hilarious. He's got all the girls around him, and people are going, "Oh, I'm too ugly." And here's this guy, he's a quad (quadriplegic). He has to use various devices just to communicate with people. He can't even speak, and he's got all these girls. They're screaming. They're getting naked with him. It kind of puts the lie to a few concepts that people have.

Ben: When we played at Justice League, he came on and did that, too. When they brought him up - I'm sitting in the back - I can't really see what exactly is going on and I was a bit more concerned with matters closer at hand. For everybody who was, [angrily] "What was up with that!" there was an equal number of people there who had no concern,



DENMARK VESEY WAS A MAN
KNOWN TO FUCK SHIT UP

that were screaming "Timmy" [in South Park's Cartman's voice] at him when they brought him up. I didn't even really notice it until I saw the tape of it and I hear it in the background, "Timmy!" The guilt/shock factor; there's something to be said about that.

Frank: Besides that, which becomes more interesting, is what the people out there show of themselves, more than anything else. It gets displayed. Actually, the Gilman St. one

was really hilarious, because after the whole thing with Speckles (a dead dog that Frank brought to the stage with him - people in the audience got the tags from the dog's collar and called the previous owners), these people were running up to him (Frank Moore) asking if I had kidnapped him. "Are you here on your own free will? We're here to help you."

Megan: "We want to call your owners, too."

Frank: Fucking hilarious.

Megan: How did you come up with the music for "Lobster Quadrille"?

Frank: Actually, there was a movie called *Dream Child* and in that movie they had this, um, big New York university...

Megan: Cornell? Julliard? SUNY Purchase?

Frank: No...

Ben: Rikers?

Frank: No, not Rikers.

Ben: I'd have a better chance of getting in there.

Frank: Anyways, in *Dream Child* they had these people doing a chorus of "Lobster Quadrille" and I went, "Finally, the music to it!" Because, actually, I've always been a big fan of Lewis Carroll and if you really read those books, there's a lot of shit there. A lot of things get questioned. Things get looked at from different points of view. A lot of what people talk about with pranks is taking a slant, and angle off, and all of a sudden all of the underpinnings are just sitting there. Everyone kind of agrees not to look behind the curtain. "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain!" and they go, "Oh, okay."

Megan: "Alright, can't be anything to see there." Have any of you been arrested?

Frank: Well, yeah. Actually I've never been arrested for anything major. Matter of fact, a few months ago I was sitting at this table and all these people are going, "I went to jail." "Yeah, I went to jail, too." "Looks like we're all felons here." And I went, "No." They all looked over and said, "Yeah, well you just never got caught." "Yeah, that's generally the idea."

Ben: Only in driving related stuff. That's the only legal problems I've ever had.

Frank: I think I covered arrests on my last spoken word CD. [laughter]

Megan: How does your family feel about you?

Frank: They're probably praying for me.

www.feederz.com

CHOICE WARS

article by Karla Pérez-Villalta

artwork by Art Fuentes



An 18-year-old woman in Sub-Saharan Africa got an illegal abortion, but whoever performed it could not tell the difference between the vagina and the anus. The person destroyed her anus, rectum, bladder, uterus and intestines. She lost her uterus and ended up with a permanent colostomy, a procedure that attached her colon to her abdomen so stool can leave her body.

"My heart bled for her as we repaired what was left of her womanhood," said Dr. Solomon Orero, who presented the case at UCLA earlier this year. Orero is a Kenyan gynecologist who teaches health providers how to complete botched abortions in African nations where abortion is illegal.

By imposing a gag order on physicians like Orero, George W. Bush has made it impossible for them to press their governments to legalize abortion, though complications from unsafe abortions account for up to fifty percent of maternal deaths in Africa.

But it's also becoming more difficult for Americans to obtain birth control services and abortions due to actions by the Bush administration and Republican legislators. Political appointments, executive orders, the misrepresentation of medical evidence, funding provisos, and U.S.-sponsored Christian right delegations to international bodies that decide on global family planning policy and funding are undoing more than thirty years of hard-won reproductive rights.

Pro-choice advocates face the task of getting the public's attention about the erosion of their rights against a backdrop of unprecedented national events and a largely disinterested media.

"People see us as Chicken Little, always running around crying, 'the sky is falling, the sky is falling,'" said Kathy Kneer, executive director of Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California. "There's a lot at stake here. Because so many people believe that family planning should be available, they just don't believe us. We have to find a way so people believe us when we say the sky is falling."

Kneer recently spoke to staff and volunteers at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Pasadena, saying that due to steep funding cuts centers like theirs may be forced to see fewer patients. The clinic provides low-income clients with basic preventative care such as Pap smears, breast and pelvic exams, as well as sexually transmitted disease (STD) treatment, contraception and sexual health education. Four percent of their total budget last year was spent on abortion services.

Contemplating the budget shortages this fiscal year, she said, "We never predicted that this administration would go this far. I find myself saying, 'There's a lot of work to do.'"

Setting the Tone: Cabinet Posts for Anti-choice Extremists, Executive Orders

Bush wasted no time in setting the tone for an administration that would be hostile to reproductive rights. As early as December of 2000, he had already announced John Ashcroft as his choice for attorney general.

As attorney general and governor of Missouri, Ashcroft defended anti-choice legislation all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court and signed a bill declaring that life begins at conception. As U.S. senator, he opposed insurance coverage of contraceptives for federal employees and a resolution in favor of *Roe v. Wade* (the Supreme Court decision that made abortion legal in 1973). As U.S. attorney general, Ashcroft is entrusted with protecting the safety of abortion providers and patients. He also plays a key role in appointing federal judges.

Four days after Bush was sworn in, the Senate confirmed his nomination of former Wisconsin governor Tommy Thompson as Secretary of Health & Human Services (HHS). During his confirmation hearings, Thompson said he would order a review of the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) approval of RU486 (mifepristone), the "abortion pill." As governor, he signed into law several bills that

declared that life begins at conception, required waiting periods and biased counseling for women who sought abortions and placed restrictions on minors' access to abortion. As secretary of HHS, he oversees the federal offices that set national health policies and priorities, funding and research – the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the FDA and the Office of Population Affairs (OPA).

Within his first two days in office Bush reinstated the Mexico City Policy (also known as the "global gag rule," originally imposed by former President Ronald Reagan in 1984), which forbids nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in foreign countries from using their own funds to offer, advocate for, or refer patients to abortion services if they receive U.S. funds for family planning. And, he closed the White House Office for Women's Initiatives and Outreach.

The Boston Globe reported that callers who heard a recorded message after six rings were dismayed to find that the office had shut down. Established by former President Bill Clinton's administration, the office had reviewed policies that affected women, including economic legislation such as bankruptcy law. The White House did not announce the closing of the office and told *The Globe* that it simply "expired" at the end of Clinton's term.

But Bush undoubtedly gave women a voice in the top echelons of the new White House and *The Globe* revealed the curriculum vitae of the appointees. He appointed Diana Furchtgott-Roth to the top position at the Council of Economic Advisers – she's a conservative economist who says there is no gender gap in pay. Kay Coles James was chosen to direct the Office of Personnel Management, in charge of labor and discrimination rules within federal offices. Coles James is a Christian activist who opposes affirmative action and questioned the definition of rape in a letter to a publication of the Heritage Foundation – the conservative think-tank that warned Reagan about feminists' increasing political clout and recommended counter actions in their master plans for the administration, *Mandate for Leadership I* and *Mandate for Leadership II*.

The Bush administration has also busied itself appointing a string of anti-abortion judges to Circuit Courts of Appeals, which can set new precedents. Circuit Court justices make judgments on required abortion waiting periods, pre-abortion counseling, state abortion bans and establish parameters outside of abortion facilities that protesters must not cross. Judicial appointments are for life.

Some of Bush's most controversial judicial nominations include Claude A. Allen (currently second in command at the HHS) to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. At HHS, Allen has advocated to double the budget for abstinence-only until marriage programs to prevent pregnancy and STDs, despite a lack of evidence that these programs work. If guilt by association is any indicator, he was also the campaign press person for Senator Jesse Helms. As of press time, he is still awaiting confirmation. Another nomination to track is Carolyn Kuhl's, to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals – as deputy solicitor general during the Reagan administration, she urged the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, and as a private attorney, she argued in favor of the domestic gag rule that forbade clinics to discuss with patients abortion as an option. If Bush gets elected or maneuvers a second term, he will have the chance to appoint two or three U.S. Supreme Court justices. For more information on these and other judicial appointments and nominations, visit www.iwhc.org.

Redefining When a Fetus Becomes a Person

She's known only as J.D.S., a 22-year-old woman who weighs 92 lbs. and is six months pregnant after having been raped in a home for the disabled in Orlando, Florida. The state's Governor Jeb Bush has insisted that a guardian be appointed for the fetus, violating a Florida Supreme Court ruling and *Roe v. Wade*'s concession that it's not known at what point a fetus should be considered a person.

J.D.S. suffers from autism, cerebral palsy and is mentally retarded. Able to communicate only basic needs and with no known family members, she has only recently been appointed a guardian (under state law she should have been appointed a guardian when she turned 18). But, if the appointed fetal guardian demands it, J.D.S. may be forced to bring the child to term whether or not her disabled body can handle the delivery. Her case personifies a current tide of legislation and policies that often reduce women to little more than a fetus's primary residence. However, in a similar case in Miami, Florida, a Circuit Court judge granted permission for a deaf, mentally disabled rape victim to have her 6-month-old fetus aborted, also through a legal guardian who advocated for the woman. Fetal guardianship was not an issue and appeals to the Florida Supreme Court were rejected.

One legislative measure calls abortion "infanticide." The Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003 (S.3), recently passed by the U.S. House of Representatives, prohibits "late-term" abortions regardless of the reason or whether carrying the pregnancy to term poses a risk to a woman's health.

In defense of the ban, George W. Bush said he "will help build a culture of life in America. I urge Congress to quickly resolve any differences and send me the final bill as soon as possible so that I can sign it into law." The bill will probably be on his desk in a matter of weeks.

Anti-abortion legislators invented the science-fiction term "partial-birth abortion" in a stroke of public relations brilliance. The term is so vague that even the medical community is at odds on what it means.

"Partial birth abortion" is a non-medical term, apparently referring to a particular abortion procedure known as intact dilation and extraction (intact D&X...), a rare variant of a more common midterm abortion procedure known as dilation and evacuation (D&E)," the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) said in a statement.

Because the logic-defying term "partial birth abortion" is not medically recognized, the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003 (S.3) is able to say that, "there are no medical schools that provide instruction on abortions that include the instruction in partial-birth abortions in their curriculum." How do you teach a procedure that does not exist?

In addition, with the help of careless journalists, anti-choice mouthpieces have successfully convinced the public that intact D&X procedures are always "late-term" abortions. In fact, when intact D&X abortions are performed it's usually during 20- to 24-weeks of gestation, which is technically a midterm pregnancy.

The PR campaign is further heightened by what an intact D&X procedure involves – the fetus is taken through the birth canal feet first, with all but the head exposed. The physician then uses a sharp instrument on the base of the fetus' skull and suctions the brain before completely removing the fetus.

It's important to note that because formal data has not been collected – not through neglect, but because exact abortion techniques are not routinely detailed in clinic reports – the medical community disagrees about the number of intact D&X procedures performed each year. Some reports say the figure is 2,200 such abortions per year (0.17% of all abortions), others report up to 3,000. What medical organizations do agree on is that trained medical professionals, and not politicians, should make medical decisions.

The ACOG press release quotes another policy statement they released that called the bans "inappropriate, ill advised, and dangerous." It reiterated that, while a select panel of ACOG physicians could not identify a circumstance in which an intact D&X would be the "only" (their italics) option to protect a woman's life or health, the decision should be left to the discretion of a doctor and the patient.

An American Medical Association statement issued in March said it did not support the proposed bill because it criminalizes physicians who perform the procedure. The latest version of the act penalizes physicians with fines, up to two years imprisonment, or both. Some physicians say the impact of the ban is virtually meaningless in practice since the alternative abortion methods that already predominate will continue to be used, and that pro-choice advocates shouldn't have taken up the issue in the first place because it made doctors vulnerable.

The PR victory lies in the fact that anti-abortion legislators took one of the less frequently used abortion methods to paint gory images, and gave it a meaningless but descriptive term coupled with an extended gestational age so that the public sees a child rather than a fetus. It worked. A Gallup Organization poll reported in January that 70 percent of U.S. adults are in favor of the ban. Thirty-one states have passed similar bans, though only four met legal requirements to enforce them.



There's a lot at stake here... We have to find a way so people believe us when we say the sky is falling.

Misrepresenting Medical Research

In an interview with Bill Moyers, columnist Molly Ivins described Texas Republicans and their slashing of public services in the state. "The Texas Republican party has been completely taken over by the Christian right," she said. "These people really believe that public institutions should be destroyed....Well, the fact that that's not doable, that it's impossible, that it's an absurd proposition, is not something you can talk to these people about. It's like trying to talk to followers of David Koresh....They're like people in a cult. They are so convinced of their own rectitude that they are not open to fact or persuasion."

This is the same legislative body that approved a law that requires doctors to give their patients pre-abortion counseling, during which they must advise them that abortions cause breast cancer.

But the American Cancer Society and 100 worldwide experts who have analyzed 30 relevant studies say this is simply false information. The American Cancer Society said the link between breast cancer and abortion was made in flawed studies whose inaccuracy is due to the inherent "recall bias" of control-case studies.

Yet, the Texas Senate approved the Women's Right to Know Act, which also requires women to sit through a 24-hour "reflection period" before they can receive an abortion. The law also specifies that clinics must offer women a color picture of what the fetus probably looks like, even in cases of rape or incest. Eighteen other states have similar laws.

The Impact on Men

Men might be tempted to shrug off these issues because at first glance, they appear to affect only women. But the Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI), which is a research and policy analysis organization affiliated with Planned Parenthood, released a study which found that men rely heavily on women to take charge of birth control decisions – and will continue to until a hormonal contraceptive is developed for men in about five to 10 years.

The study reported that men also share the impact of abortion, since

men in their 20s are responsible for 53 percent of the pregnancies that end in abortion; men 30 and older, for one-third of abortions performed each year.

Recent policies regarding out-of-wedlock childbearing have targeted men. The 1992 Child Support Recovery Act makes it a federal crime to willfully fail to pay child support; the 1998 Deadbeat Parents Act makes it a felony to cross state lines to evade a child support obligation.

"Whatever the intent of these laws," said the study, "about one in four nonresident fathers who are not in compliance with child support laws are so poor – and receive so little help in surmounting poverty – that there is little hope of their being able to assist their children, however much they might want to. The same is true of fathers who are in prison."

Federally funded family planning clinics are struggling to stay afloat due to funding shortfalls. They are also trying to find creative ways to reach male clients, who are underserved – due to both clinics' inability to understand their needs and men's own reluctance or inability to access services. But men did make 94,000 visits to federally funded family planning clinics for counseling, education or birth control supplies in 1995 (the year for which the most recent data exists). The clinics remain one of the few medical services available for uninsured and low-income males. Clinic under-funding, reduction of services or closures would affect men twofold – it would mean less access for men to receive health services, including STD treatment and vasectomies; and by offering fewer services to men's female partners, including abortion, it would mean less access to the female contraceptive methods on which men rely and the possibility of becoming a father due to unintended pregnancy.

Pushing Abstinence-only Education

A "webmemo" on the Heritage Foundation's website titled, "Abstinence Education Programs: The Only Sex Ed That Actually Works" cites a study on 15- to 19-year-old girls released by the *Adolescent and Family Health* journal and claims that the findings are meaningful because "they negate the previous – and widely accepted –

As governor, he signed into law several bills that declared that life begins at conception...



claims that the decrease in birth and pregnancy rates is due primarily to the increased use and effectiveness of contraception, such as condoms."

It adds that the study "underlines an increasing phenomenon – traditional moral norms do in fact lead to better outcomes even when not presented as moral religious teaching. These programs don't have to spin the data; they just have to get it out there. Critics will surely take care of trying to soil it."

Not to soil it, but the *Adolescent and Family Health* journal's editor-in-chief is Dr. Alma L. Golden, who served as the medical director for SAGE Advice Council. SAGE trains physicians and health professionals how to "encourage" youth to delay sexual activity until marriage. They give professionals a script to follow during patients' visits so they can probe how sexually active the young patients are. If the patient has not had sex, they're to say, "I'm glad you haven't started having sex. Waiting until marriage allows you to avoid STDs, pregnancy and a broken heart."

If the patient has already started having sex, the physician is trained to say, "As your doctor, I am concerned about the risks of having sex on your health and happiness. I encourage you to become abstinent until marriage to protect yourself." Physicians are coached to prefix any advice about sexual activity with the authoritarian, perhaps intimidating, "As your physician, I recommend...."

HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson appointed Golden to be the deputy assistant secretary for Population Affairs, the office that advises the HHS on issues regarding adolescent pregnancy and birth control, as well as how to dole out federal family planning funds.

AGI reports that this brand of sex education is the current trend, and that an increasing proportion of sex education teachers in the U.S. use an abstinence-only approach – 23% in 1999, compared with 2% in 1998. One in 10 teachers do not cover contraception at all, and about three in 10 emphasize that contraceptives are ineffective against pregnancy and STDs.

An AGI analysis (funded in part by a grant from the HHS) of studies, also on 15- to 19-year-old girls, found that, while U.S. teen pregnancy rates have declined, it remains one of the highest in the developed world. One-quarter of the decrease in teen pregnancies is due to abstinence, while three-quarters of the decline is due to teens' use of more effective contraceptives. There are other anecdotal reports that teens' definition of "abstinence" includes oral and anal sex.

The International Women's Health Coalition pointed out that "Programs that Work," a curriculum resource for sex ed educators has disappeared from the website for the CDC, also under Thompson's direction. Currently, a message on the website reads, "Thank you for your interest in Programs that Work (PTW). The CDC has discontinued PTW and is considering a new process that is more responsive to changing needs and concerns of state and local education and health agencies and community organizations. Watch this space for further information about how we will assist communities in identifying effective and appropriate health risk reduction programs for youth."

Thompson also led the U.S. delegation that used its superpower status to prevent the United Nations' special session on children from including references to condoms or abortions from the summit's official declaration on children's rights. The U.S. delegation said that abstinence was the only form of sexual education it would support – out of 180 delegations and 60 world leaders, only Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Libya, Syria and the Vatican agreed.

The U.S. delegation included representatives from the Concerned Women for America, whose mission statement says they "bring Biblical principles into all levels of public policy"; and John Klink, the former Vatican lay diplomat, who Bush had nominated to direct the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, but who the Senate refused to confirm. The U.N. performance was a culmination of a two-year campaign, spearheaded by organizations such as the Heritage Foundation.

Foreign Intervention: The Global Gag Rule

Former President Bill Clinton had lifted the Mexico City Policy, or global gag rule, on his third day in office in 1993 and opposed annual attempts since 1995 by a Republican Congress to reinstate it.

In the years that NGOs were free from the gag rule, Dr. Solomon Orero saw improvements in Africa. "There was a marked improvement in the level of funding for research, services, education, advocacy and equipment provision in all abortion related activities," said Orero. "For us, we witnessed more openness in not only discussions and trainings to increase the provider base for abortion services, but also improvements in the official attitude towards those who had already suffered abortion com-

plications.”

But, Congress got the upper hand in 1999 when it used \$1 billion in back dues owed to the UN as leverage. To release the UN funds, Clinton had to accept a version of the gag rule that made NGOs certify in writing that they would not use their own funds to provide abortion services or advocate for it. The conditions would apply for the remainder of the fiscal year in 2000, after which the idea may have been that a new Democrat president would pick up the baton and readdress the policy.

Bush took office instead and reinstated the policy as one of his first executive actions. The gag rule essentially means that in exchange for receiving family planning funds from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), foreign NGOs must agree not to use *their own funds* to perform or promote abortion – even if abortion is legal in their country. The reason he gave was the same as Reagan’s, “It is my conviction that taxpayer funds should not be used to pay for abortions or advocate or actively promote abortion, either here or abroad.”

However, the 1973 Helms Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act already prohibits U.S. funds from being used for abortions in foreign countries. The gag rule, instead, limits the use of the NGOs’ own funds. The gag rule affects NGOs in 59 countries – abortion is legal in 17 of them.

“With the reinstatement of the gag rule, several organizations that were funded by USAID and were working in the reproductive health arena, including abortion, suddenly dropped it like a hot burning plate,” Orero said.

Magaly Marques is the executive director of the Pacific Institute for Women’s Health, which is based in Los Angeles and promotes sexual and reproductive services in various countries. She said that the policy reinforces religious and moral stigma against abortion in many regions, including Latin America.

Marques lived in Bolivia and recalled women who developed infections after illegal abortions. Rather than go to a legitimate medical center, where they might be judged, they went back to the illegal abortion provider for treatment.

“They would go back to the illegal place – a dark room, where nothing was clean, where they would be in and out and women would line up, quiet and scared, not knowing what was going to happen to them,” she said.

She added that currently, if women experience post-abortion complications and they go to official hospitals, doctors delay their treatment for hours because “it’s just an abortion.”

Marques said that to induce abortion in these countries, women use knitting needles, herbs or would take an over-the-counter gastric ulcer medication that was believed to provoke abortions, until the government got wise to the practice and made it more difficult to obtain the medication.

The gag rule has “an intense effect in holding countries from a natural development toward women’s rights and advocacy because of the economic situations of poor countries, where the health systems are very weak,” she added.

The inconsistency of U.S. policy about abortions in foreign countries, which fluctuates according to which political party dominates legislation, sends developing countries a confusing message and they defer to the U.S.’s authority as a world leader. The resulting attitude overseas, said Marques, is “If the U.S. has gone back to review its own policies, there must be something wrong. The average person starts questioning that maybe the U.S. found that something is not scientifically sound or good for people.”

Though it’s estimated that 85 percent of abortions in Latin America are unsafe, Marques said the impact is harder on Africa, which receives four times as much USAID funds as Latin America.

Orero agreed, “Those policies are going to affect us especially in Africa. Remember, when America talks, the rest of the world trembles.”

A loophole in the gag rule allows for post-abortion care for women if their lives are in danger due to a botched abortion. Orero co-founded the Kisumu Medical and Educational Trust (KMET), a group of physicians who travel throughout Africa to train other health professionals to complete abortions using rudimentary equipment, often in rural settings.

“I justify providing safe services in pursuit of saving a woman from a potential death, or if she survives the ordeals of unsafe service, the chronic ill health with the possibility of never giving birth again,” Orero said.

Some of the methods African women use to induce abortions include drinking ground glass gulped as powders, strong juices, herbs, liquid soap, overdosing on drugs and inserting bicycle wires or laundry deter-



Federally funded family planning clinics are struggling to stay afloat due to funding shortfalls...

gents in their vaginas. African hospitals also give women with abortion complications low priority and the waiting time to receive medical care averages 12 hours, but may be as long as a week.

“You know, the U.S. has all the infrastructure for proper medical care and also, the population is properly educated about prevention of unwanted pregnancies backed up with very good services,” said Orero. “Where I practice, women are poor, pregnant, powerless, with no rights even to decide. You can imagine what a combination this is.”

Pleasing the Religious Right

Meanwhile, at Concerned Women for America headquarters in Washington, D.C., one of their more prolific writers Angie Vineyard writes a gripping account of a face-off between the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and U.S. delegates at a conference and titles it, “Shutting Down the Feminists.”

She describes the scene as “filled with feminists and anti-American sentiment.” The aim of the weekly conferences is to “dispel rumors and present cold, hard facts about how much the United States is helping women worldwide.”

The issue at hand is “sex trafficking and providing access to media and information technology.” She adds, “radical feminism constantly reared its ugly head..., demanding not only to be heard, but accepted.”

Angela King, special advisor on gender issues and advancement of women, pushed for 50-50 quotas in gender representation at all levels of the United Nations. Requests were made for “abortion-on-demand” and sex education. European Union delegates “demanded that ‘all women have a right to have control over and decide freely on their sexual and reproductive health.’” Gloria Steinem called George W. Bush an “illegitimate president” who used his position ‘to divide and endanger the whole world.’” Bush was criticized for not giving money for condoms to fight the AIDS epidemic in Africa and for pushing abstinence instead.

But in the middle of it all, a U.S. delegate stood up and spoke in defense of abstinence and how successful the approach has been in Uganda, to “great applause... and hushed the whole group.”

The article concludes, “One thing was abundantly clear. The U.S. delegation had left an indelible impression on the United Nations... ‘the opposition realized that we are a force to be reckoned with.’”

A *Newsweek* article reported, “White House adviser Karl Rove holds regular conference calls with evangelical Christians and Catholics to make sure they’re happy.”

What Can You Do?

This piece is not comprehensive by any means – it's a sampling of some of the brightest decisions our government has recently made and it was difficult to wade through the spin on both sides of the debate. The arguable advantage on the anti-abortion side is that their arguments elicit emotion rather than reason. Kind of like the botched abortion example I gave in the lead – it was probably the only way to hook you.

As your writer, I recommend that you keep digging – don't trust your friends, your mom, your priest or me. Note that the tagline says I work for Planned Parenthood. I returned to the organization after 12 years of making "real" money because, in part, I've lost too many friends to AIDS and wanted to remind sexually active teens to protect themselves. The kids I work with are literally the reason I jump out of bed every morning – they're passionate, opinionated and intelligent. I used to work in public affairs at the largest HMO in the country, but in my current incarnation I wanted to stay far away from politics. I didn't feel compelled to address political issues until I came across an article that said that Tommy Thompson led a U.S. delegation to keep condoms from youth in Africa. It's the one issue that politicized me and that's how my own digging began two months ago.

Mainstream media is either ignoring or burying most of the stories related to the wrangling over family planning policies in the deepest depths of U.S. bureaucracy. Form your own opinions by consulting medical literature whenever possible and realize that even they are biased. We're largely on our own.

At this point, we start to feel not just confused, but powerless. Nothing is further from the truth – there's plenty we can do to defend what we believe. The U.S. government is a living, huffing, political animal to be tamed rather than feared. But, like Kathy Kneer said, there's a lot of work to do.

Take care of yourself. Part of the reason why this attack on reproductive rights seems like a stealth campaign is that we're burned out on Ashcroft's orange, yellow, lime and polka-dotted terrorism alerts; we've had it with wars, unemployment, and frivolous news reports designed to scare us about everything from hazardous toilet bowl cleaners to carcinogenic french fries. We're physically, spiritually and emotionally unable to care for others if we're unemployed, depressed, heart-broken, addicted or just plain worn out. Before we can realize in earnest that we can contribute to a cause, or that we're even slightly better off than someone else, we have to feel confident about our own safety. So, take care of yourself so you can take care of others.

Keep your eye on the ball. Many of the legislative issues and court cases presented here are changing on a weekly, sometimes daily basis. Bill tracking is available at <http://thomas.loc.gov>.

Do what you do, and do it with a purpose. There's no need for anyone to cash in his 99-cent taco fund to give it to a local family planning clinic, though it'd be nice. People can give in other ways, sometimes more meaningfully. A writer can write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper. A band member with a network of like-minded musicians can hold a concert with proceeds benefiting a reproductive rights nonprofit. A bartender, club owner or café owner can assign a happy hour one evening a week, with proceeds going to a local clinic. An artist can donate artwork to a clinic that's in desperate need of talented graphic artists who can help produce basic communications tools – pamphlets, letterhead, posters and much more. If a person's salivary glands are in good working order, she can volunteer at a nonprofit, licking envelopes for letter-writing campaigns that oppose anti-choice legislation.

Any skepticism about giving creatively can be cured at <http://www.poetsagainsthewar.org>. The 11,000 poets featured on this site, which protests the war in Iraq, grew from the integrity of poet Sam Hamill, who boycotted a poetry event at the White House and asked 50 fellow poets to organize a movement against the war – 1,500 poets responded within four days. One of the editors of the fanzine you're reading cleared \$40 in income last year, but gave this space to raise these issues. That's creative giving.

Be a smart voter. Mr. McCrea, a wise government teacher at Alhambra High School in California, did an exceptionally good job of teaching his senior class that politics were functional – a dynamic, temperamental means to an end. He said people make the mistake of staking all their voting power on the presidential elections every four years, but ignore local elections that make an equal – or greater – impact on people's lives. Pay

close attention to Congressional candidates' voting records on reproductive rights and vote accordingly. Once they're in office, pressure the bejeezus out of them to vote like they have a pair – of ovaries.

While the outcome of the 2000 election left us more jaded than usual, consider columnist Molly Ivins' advice, "Look, this government is us. You own it, I own it. Everybody owns it. We're the Board of Directors. We control this thing. They work for us. And we've lost that sense that it's ours."

Follow the money. Bush's top campaign contributors included Bank of America, the car rental company Enterprise Leasing and MBNA Corporation, the nation's top credit card issuer. Still want to do business with them? To see where your consumer dollars are ending up, look up any business's Political Action Committee or individual contributor at <http://www.opensecrets.org>.

Support grassroots action. Women (and men) are hosting small gatherings in their homes with Planned Parenthood activists and educators for a pitch on what's new. Friends who attend host other gatherings in *their* neighborhoods, and so on. This ain't mom's Tupperware party. Advocates talk about public affairs issues, activism, sexuality and new birth control methods. Ask if the local PP affiliate is using this approach – if they're not, ask them to.

Finally, *Razorcake* has often called attention to the works of historian Howard Zinn, who has written and spoken tirelessly about an alternate American reality. If we've learned anything from Zinn it's that people can change political tides, no matter how powerful the current may seem.

"People are practical," he wrote in *You Can't be Neutral on a Moving Train*. "They want change but feel powerless, alone, do not want to be the blade of grass that sticks up above all others and is cut down. They wait for a sign from someone else who will make the first move, or the second. And at certain times in history, there are intrepid people who take the risk that if they make that first move others will follow quickly enough to prevent their being cut down. And if we understand this, we might make that first move."

Be intrepid. Make a move.

Karla Pérez-Villalta is a youth education coordinator for Planned Parenthood. Jimmy Alvarado contributed to this article. For a complete list of sources used in this article, email sean@razorcake.com.



Some of the methods African women use to induce abortions include drinking ground glass gulped as powders, strong juices, herbs, liquid soap, overdosing on drugs and inserting bicycle wires or laundry detergents in their vaginas.



Please note: If you're an established record company, and you send us a pre-release without all the album art, we're probably going to throw that shit away... cock gobblers.

ADD-C/GIANT BAGS OF WEED: Split: 7"

I picked this 7" up because the name ADD(insert lightning bolt)C cracked me up. A couple of spins showed me that these guys are more than just a silly name. Giant Bags of Weed play catchy songs that would fall into the pits of pop punk if it wasn't so sloppy and dirty. As it stands, their lack of polish save them. All four songs are upbeat and a little angry and a lot of fun to listen to. God, I love a crappy four-track recording. ADD-C come through with a lot of trash and fuzz, too, but they're less poppy. It's pretty heartfelt punk rock, not unlike The Thumbs (and, if you know what a fan of The Thumbs I am, you know what a big compliment this is). I was expecting something silly and half-ass, and this record actually impressed the shit out of me. —Sean (Half-Day)

ALLEGED GUNMEN, THE: Audio Invasion: 7"

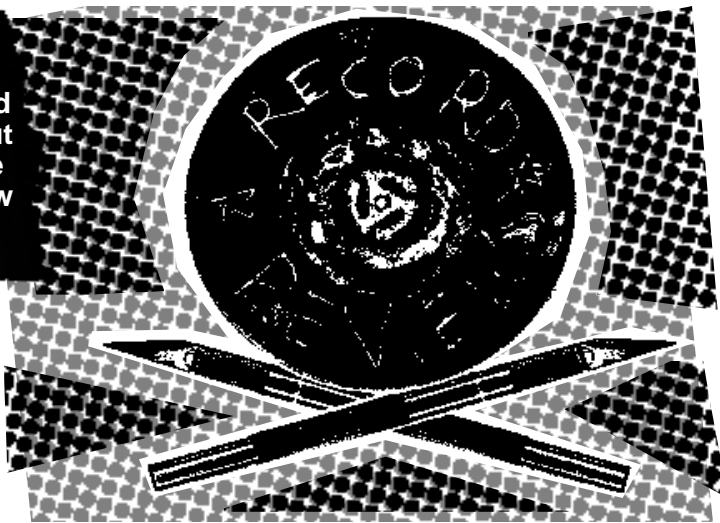
I'm all for The Clash. I stand by *London Calling*. The Alleged Gunmen make up two brand new could-be Clash songs by rearranging many distinctive pieces of from multiple songs on *London Calling* and filling in the particulars with their own rubber cement, so everything sounds pretty much aligned. It's good, but it's strange how absolutely reminiscent the song "Audio Invasion" is to very particular parts of Clash songs. Not only does it have the caw, caw, caw bird sound as the song "London Calling," there's some zig-zag fish (Mick Jones calls it a cheese grater in the song itself) and keyboard dangleings that seem to come almost directly from "Revolution Rock." Couple that to the similarity of the intent of the lyrics: "this here music smash up the nation/ this here music cause a sensation" vs. "audio invasion across the nation/ it's a Gunman revolution," and a huge thought bubble with a question mark pops over my head. How close to one's heroes does a band have to set up their microphones? —Todd (Kapow)

ALLERGIC TO WHORES: Life Through Death's Eyes: CD

This venerable hardcore unit unleashes nine more high velocity assaults on the unsuspecting. As in efforts past, things are heavy and intense throughout, even when they slow it down a notch, and remain so without relying on cliched metal breakdowns. They remain one of my faves of the newer crop of hardcore groups. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rodent Popsicle)

ALLSTONIANS, THE: Bottoms Up!: CD

I'm listening to ska again, and once again it's due to Matt Maloney, drummer of the Allstonians. During the late '90s, when everything was ska (if you took ska to be No Doubt, checkers, and skanking), Matt



Remember their names, you'll be screaming (for) them (to stop) all night long!!!

—Rev. Norb



not only hosted a ska show on the local Portland, Maine college radio, but also DJed once a month on Thursday at a club called Zootz (RIP). His presentation of ska (Jamaican ska, dub, dancehall, and a little bluebeat) was so unpopular that the club would bring swank couches onto the dance floor so the ten people there could be comfortable. Before that he put out a zine called *Stay Rude* (the radio show and club night went by the same name). He was dedicated and passionate about the music that he considered ska, but he didn't just talk the talk, he knew his shit. I never listened to the Allstonians before Matt joined them, but *Bottoms Up!*, their first release in (I think) about six years, is strongly impressive. They are true to the sound of their early influences. The Allstonians make it easy to see how difficult it is to master ska, as so many fall far below, which is probably why I've barely gone near my ska records in years. It all comes down to two things — their accuracy and their proficiency. Thanks to the Allstonians, not only have I been playing their album, but Desmond Dekker, The Skatalites, and Justin Hinds have found their way back to the turntable as well. Matt, I owe you a beer the next time I'm back east. —Megan (Fork In Hand)

ANGELIC UPSTARTS: Teenage Warning: CD

Hear that? That's me kicking a hole in my wall as I crank this bad boy full volume. This, a reissue of the band's classic first album, still sounds as great as it did way back when. Primal punk ranting and raving, football terrace chant choruses and classics like "The Murder of Liddle Towers," "I'm an Upstart," and "Leave Me Alone" make this a must-have for any self-respecting punk fan. To sweeten the deal, Captain Oi has tacked on the single versions of "Liddle Towers" and "Police Oppression." —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

ANGRY AMPUTEES: Slut Bomb: CD

I remember seeing this band up in Santa Barbara a few years back, and damn if this CD doesn't remind me of how cool

of a live band these Angry Amputees are (speaking of Satan Barbara, aren't the fifteen minutes up for that band, The Ataris? Who's in charge of watching the clock and keeping time? Their fifteen minutes are over, for fuck's sake. They need to go away. Now. How dare that band desecrate the happy memories of early '80s home videogaming, especially mine in grade school. FUCK!). Ahem... anyways, this is a band you should be checking out. It's chock fulla chunked-up rock punk that I found myself playing more and more this past week, kind of like the catchy commercial on the television you catch yourself humming along to word-for-word unexpectedly. Not to compare the Amputees to a TV commercial, 'cause that wouldn't be fair — commercials usually get the finger from yours truly, but the Angry Amputees get both my thumbs up. Enough hooks and different song tempos to keep your fat head occupied for awhile, not just the same old thrash and bash with monkey beats in the background. Choice butcher block cuts here include "Vanity Fair Blackout," "She's Got It All," and the wonderfully done, early Muffs-sounding rocker, "Put Me to Bed." Not a bad release, not bad at all. —Designated Dale (Dead Teenager)

AVENGING DISCO GODFATHERS OF SOUL, THE: The Ultimate in Authenticity and Musical Usefulness: CD

Probably the most misleading band name ever. It doesn't sound like the Avengers playing disco or the Godfathers playing soul or any other possible combination of those words. It's actually downtuned metalcore with really bizarre breaks: sometimes they're jazzy, sometimes they're noisy, sometimes they sound like video game music or something. If you actually paid attention to this review and all that sounds like your idea of a good time, remind me to not hang out with you. —Not Josh (Alone)

BABY LITTLE TABLETS: Self-titled: CD

If you're like me, you might be asking yourself, "What kind of dumb ass name

is Baby Little Tablets?" As soon as the vocals kicked in on this one, I realized that it's one of those names that probably makes perfect sense in Japanese but doesn't translate well to English, like Guitar Wolf. It seems like there are a lot of good Leatherface-influenced bands coming out of Japan these days, and this is no exception. It's kind of like a less polished version of the Urchin, although lacking a lot of the hooks. This is a real good band that I look forward to hearing more from, but I still say that the best Japanese punk band ever was the Registrators. —Not Josh (Boss Tuneage)

BALANCE OF TERROR/STRAIGHT TO HELL: Split 7"

There's something cleansing about no-bullshit, full-speed-ahead hardcore. It's sort of like sandpaper. You feel like you can rub it against anything — politics, dogmatism, bad jobs, being penniless, and marginalized — and by its abrasive friction, it makes things shinier. Hitting darkness with its own form of rough force. Now that Victory Records is courting boy bands, it's high time that hardcore get reclaimed by bands like these, who take cues from Negative Approach, From Ashes Rise, and Deaththreat. I like Balance of Terror a tad more. They've already broke up, and it's a shame. I always wonder at bands who go so fast but can weave in different ways and actually hook a melody deep inside the fast-moving blades, dropping cues on how the genre can redevelop itself instead of merely repeating. —Todd (Partners In Crime)

BASSHOLES: Out in the Treetops: 2 X 7"

I must be living in an alternate universe. Bands I don't quite understand as being garage have vaulted to the top of the charts. Real ball busters as varied as The Jewws, The Dirtbombs, The Stupor Stars, The Pinkz, The Bassholes, and anything Tim Kerr's been involved in in the last fifteen odd years, continue largely unabated, ignored by the national press. One day soon, when the majors' mine shaft is overpopulated and they all die in their orgy from self-congratulatory asphyxiation, I'm putting a couple of donuts and some Vicodin up as a bet that the Bassholes will continue to sweat, scream, and writhe. These seven songs cover the gamut from Iggy and the Stooges to Joy Division. They retain the cyst and shambles approach to good, old-fashioned, low budget creep rock'n'roll that's way more in tune with Screamin' Jay Hawkins than some fussy, pouty dude in too-tight pants worrying about how fat his wallet is getting. Thumbs up. —Todd (Dead Canary)

BATTALION 86: And the Spirit Survives: CD

John Ashcroft approved punk rock? Hmmm. Post 9/11 ruminations and threats from beefy bald oi boys swaddling themselves in Old Glory and marking their territory like a pack of pitbulls with the runs. This is all about turf — both the geographical sort and the kind that grows on the top of your head. In other words, if your hair-to-skin ratio is a wee bit off and you haven't gotten yourself straight with Uncle Sam, these flag-wankers might just track you down (with the help of Homeland Security?) and feed you your lunch — the croutons on your salad are going to be your own teeth, if

you get what I mean. I wish my dyslexia worked on scrambling incoming information as well as out-going, because then I could side-step the Archie Bunker lyrics and enjoy the punchy metal rock and the cool Baron Von Raschke voice. I would highly recommend the Dixie Chicks stay as far away from these patrio-bullies as possible. Orange Alert on the jingoistic meathead meter. Goes great with a super-sized order of Freedom Fries. -Aphid Peewit (Reality Clash)

BEERZONE:

British Streetpunk: CD

Well, this was a nice surprise. Nice early Peter and the Test Tube Babies-influenced punk rock, meaning that there's a good dose of humor injected into the proceedings, as evidenced by titles like "Viagra," "Saturday Night Beaver," and "I've Got the Munchies." I could swear "20th Century" is a cover, but I can't quite place it. No matter, 'cause I've got another band to add to my "favorite groups" list and I'm a much better man for it. -Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

BETTY BLOWTORCH: Last Call: CD

The CD cover sez this is "a collection of rarities, outtakes, live performances and fan favorites celebrating the life, music and wit of the late Bianca Butthole, the undisputed queen of kooks, whose life was cut tragically short in a New Orleans car crash, December 2001." This CD has songs by Butt Trumpet and Betty Blowtorch. It's a total beer-drenched rock and roll experience that reminds me of everything from the Loudmouths to L7 to even some early Hole. Pretty good. -Maddy (Foodchain)

BLACKLIST BRIGADE/ SMUT PEDDLERS: Split: CD

Blacklist Brigade play raw, tough punk rock. They sound like they learned the right lessons from Cocksparrer and the Business, but also from Orange County punk rock, from Social Distortion to the US Bombs. If Hostage Records moved to London, their first order of business would be to sign Blacklist Brigade. Luckily, Hostage can stay where it is because the BB boys have started their own internet fanzine and their own record label, and they're doing an awesome job of things on their own. Blacklist Brigade has four new songs on this split, and all of them are great. The Smut Peddlers are also a great band, and I fully endorse them, and, if you haven't picked up a Smut Peddlers album yet, you should buy *Isn* today. That said, all four songs on their half of this split are previously released. They're four great songs, but I have to say that I'm bummed when I play a brand new CD and I already know all the words to half of the songs. Shit, though, I recommend this sucker anyway. -Sean (No Front Teeth; www.nofrontteeth.co.uk)

BUMP'N'UGLIES: The All American 4 Pack: 7"

This is a band I've only heard one song at a time in various compilations. Everything I have heard consistently kicks ass. This time, I get four whole songs by them and they don't let me down. Their music is hard rockin' punk with some funny lyrics. They seem to be big fans of wrestling as well ("It Ain't Cheatin' If the Ref Ain't Lookin'"). "Hard Core Pride" is my personal favorite. This might instantly

make you think they are giving props to hardcore music. Even better... hardcore porn. "Eighteen years old, nothing to do/ can't drink or smoke, 'cause your friends won't approve/ dirty bookstore, you go inside/ its time to represent hard core pride!" It's definitely got me singing along with fist in the air. It's nice to see bands sing something so near and dear to my heart. Now I just need my Hard Core Pride tee shirt (hint hint). This is on Low Down Recordings, which seems to be a brand new label since this and one other recording are the only things on their website catalog. So why not help this fledgling label out? (Hey B-N-U, how 'bout that tee shirt now?) -Toby (Low Down <www.lowdownrecordings.com>)

BURN YOUR BRIDGES:

Self-titled: CD

It's really nice to hear hardcore that recalls bands you've always loved (NOTA, Poison Idea, Reagan Youth) and beefs it up with changes and chops and noise and yet just sounds like they're having fun rather than trying to be something that they're not, or to out-harcore or out-grind the next bunch of rockheads. Burn Your Bridges does it like champs, and as a two-piece no less. Not a weak or superfluous moment (and there are quite a few moments on here), but I wish I could figure out what the hell "Elf Defecation Barter" is about. -Cuss Baxter (Deep Six)

BURY THE LIVING: Bathed in Blood and Climbing Over the Dead: 7"

Shit howdy, this is some smokin' hardcore. Things start off with a short, fast as hell ditty called "Your Colors May Not Run But I'll Bet They Fucking Burn," and then takes the speed down a notch for the remainder of the proceedings, even throwing a swing-tinged breakdown in the middle of one of the songs. The lyrics are strong and political, but coming off more pissed than whiny. A couple of the tunes take on 9/11, openly confronting the jingoism that has been unleashed in its aftermath and addressing the point that maybe the US finally got back a little of what it's been dishing out to others for years. You get six tunes in all from these Tennessee boys and not a bad one can be found in the bunch. -Jimmy Alvarado (Kangaroo)

CAREER SUICIDE:

Self-titled: 7"

Seven blasts that come off musically like a cross between IQ32-era Necros and Blood, Guts and Pussy-era Dwarves, meaning the songs are speedy without getting ridiculous and are well executed. Good stuff. -Jimmy Alvarado (Kangaroo)

CD TRUTH:

Chemically Dependent: CD

A little reminiscent of Smogtown, only with less intensity, less surf punk twang and more '70s punk leanings. Still manages to hit all the right spots, though. -Jimmy Alvarado (F.I.M.P.)

CLONE DEFECTS:

Shapes of Venus: CD

I have come to the conclusion that this disc is the work of madmen; that Timmy Vulgar howls like a cross between Darby Crash and perhaps Iggy Pop (except in his more venal moments ["Fill My Fridge"]), when he sounds like a cross between Darby and Handsome Dick Manitoba; that this whole unholy consortium of brain-damaged proto-iconic protoplasmic

RAZZORCAKE

They used to be played in cars, and you know you're in a real classy joint if they've got a jukebox stuffed full of 'em...



THESE ARE THE
TOP 7"s SINCE
THE LAST MAG.

Underground Medicine Mailorder, Connecticut

1. **Deadly Weapons**, *Backstabber* (Lipstick)
2. **Functional Blackouts**, *Razorblade Blues* (Electrorock)
3. **Sleazies**, *Gonna Operate on Myself* (Rapid Pulse)
4. **Little Killers**, *Better Be Right* (Crypt)
5. **Flip-Tops**, *Secrets and Lies* (Vinyl Warning)
6. **Fifth Story Tennants**, *No Definition* (Unity Squad)
7. **Dirtbombs**, *Pray For Pills* (Corduroy)
8. **Buzzcocks**, *Jerk* (Damaged Goods)
9. **Kill-a-watts**, *Then and Now* (Kryptonite)
10. **Ponys**, *So Sentimental* (Contaminated)

Dr. Strange Records California

1. **Minor Threat**, *Demos* (Dischord)
2. **Damage Deposit**, *Do Damage* (Havoc)
3. **Bikini Kill**, *Peel Sessions* (Kill Rock Stars)
4. **Rudimentary Peni**, *The Underclass* (Outer Himalayan)
5. **Caustic Christ**, *self-titled* (Havoc)
6. **The Briefs**, *Love and Ulcers* (Dirtnap)
7. **Mankind/Dirt**, *Split* (Tribal War)
8. **Epoxies**, *Synthesized* (Dirtnap)
9. **Scholastic Deth**, *Killed By School* (625 Productions)
10. **Extinction Of Mankind**, *Scars Of Mankind* (Skuld)

Disgruntled Mailorder, California

1. **BellRays**, *Get It Right*, picture disc (Holy Cobra Society)
2. **Cherry Valence**, *self-titled* (Holy Cobra Society)
3. **Dirtbombs**, *Pray For Pills* (Corduroy)
4. **Neon King Kong**, *There's A Party* (Vinyl Dog)
5. **The Orphans**, *Chinatown* (Kapow)
6. **Rolling Blackouts**, *Add-Vice* (Kapow)
7. **Alleged Gunmen**, *Audio Invasion* (Kapow)
8. **Broken Bottles**, *Bloody Mary* (Revenge)
9. **Jet Boys**, *I Shit My Pants* (Black Lung)
10. **Hunches/Electric Eye/Triggers/Captain Vs. Crew**, *Anatomy Of A...* (Johnny Cat/Extra Ball/Jealous Butcher/Vinyl Warning)

rock iconoclasm is the sonic equivalent of one of those finger paintings made by retarded people that immediately appears to be both a work of abject genius and inarguably worthless, simultaneously. Taken in small chunks, there aren't really any completely unexpected musical moves thrown at the listener here (except for the production, which is so filled with wig-outs and left turns and monkeyshines and miscellaneous fol-de-rol that it almost brings to mind the proactive eclecticism of the *Sgt. Pepper/Pet Sounds* era, albeit an order of magnitude removed), it's just, in the larger picture, all the song parts are stacked, assorted, arranged and mutilated in completely unfathomable fashion, like a Lego™ tower built with the smallest blocks on the bottom and widening as it gets higher. I mean, "Ain't No New Buzz" starts with fingersnaps over an introduction not dissimilar to that of "Ghosts of Princes in Towers" by the Rich Kids, and the fingersnaps are OFF. Not off with EACH OTHER, off with THE BEAT. And YOU, the listener, will have NO idea whether or not the off-time fingersnaps are a work of demented, evil genius, or merely the product of completely incompetent fingersnappers. Overgrown juvenile delinquents who were too rock-damaged to know that they weren't supposed to like Guided By Voices peeling wheelies across rockdom's brain, or just, like, pro wrestlers trying to sound like the Wipers in a smash-up derby? My stodgiest analysis yields few results! AMERICA TAPS OUT IN SURRENDER! TIMMY VULGAR IS THE HARDEST ROCKING CLINT HOWARD STUNT DOUBLE IN NORTH AMERICA! One can't help but wonder if this is what Flipper would have sounded like had they been a product of the contemporary Detroit scene. Can't one? BEST SONG: "I Rock I Ran" BEST SONG TITLE: "Ain't No New Buzz" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I have also come to the rather troubling conclusion that, for better or worse, Detroit is the new Seattle (why is this so troubling? Well, because, first off, that makes Steve Mariucci the new Mike Holmgren, which in turn might actually make Barry Sanders the new Ahman Green. Needless to say, THAT'S a hell of a thing). —Rev. Nørb (In The Red)

COCAINE PIÑATA: *Rock That Shocks the Town*: CD

Loud, chaotic punk rock that's hard to compare to anyone, not because they don't sound like anyone, but because no one has heard of all the bands they sound like. Hell, I'll give it a try anyway. Imagine Even Worse on amphetamines — tough ass female vocals and everything sped up to the point that it's sloppy as hell. Folks who remember and love Tucson's The Blacks would be well-advised to check out Cocaine Piñata. —Sean (Cocaine Piñata)

COUNTACH: *Huge Rock*: CD

If these guys think they have friends, they are so wrong. No friend would let them commit, not only this worthless drivel to a CD, but also, c'mon — there are some people who should keep their shirts on in pictures. And this is coming from a lady who likes a keg more than a six-pack around the bellies of her men. Hairy man-tits are just a whole 'nother ball park there, cappy. —Megan (RockMafia)

D.O.A.: *Hardcore '81*: CD

Do you ever wonder why you were so damn angry as a teenager? Consider the popular music of the time. "Bette Davis Eyes" by Kim Carnes, "Endless Love" by Diana Ross and Lionel Richie and "Lady" by Kenny Rogers ruled the charts as the top three singles of 1981. Hearing these songs over and over is enough to make Gandhi want to give the pope a haymaker to the side of the head. It's almost inconceivable that an album like *Hardcore '81* could even exist in the same frame of time that pabulum like this was sucking all the air out of the world. But as anyone who likes punk rock knows, the best work is done in a vacuum, especially if that vacuum insulates you from the world of pop music. D.O.A. reflect blue collar values in both their music and their work ethic. They seemed to be on tour almost perpetually throughout the 1980s, making them one of the hardest-working and most-appreciated bands in the punk business. *Hardcore '81* is evidence of this. What we've got here is fourteen punchy songs with sing-along lyrics and minimal, but never sloppy production. What else do you need? Lots of timeless faves are here, including "D.O.A.," "001 Losers Club," "Fucked Up Baby," and more. Also included on this CD is D.O.A.'s 1984 four-song E.P. *Don't Turn Your Back on Desperate Times*. These are four tight, angry, politically-charged anthems that absolutely deserved to see the light of day again. It's an excellent bonus to a must-have album. D.O.A. is a truly important and essential punk outfit, but they will probably never get a decades-delayed or posthumous nod of approval from the mainstream music establishment in the way that the Sex Pistols, Clash and the Ramones have. Is this a bad thing? From a fan's standpoint anyway, staying off the big shot's radar is a blessing. It means that we will never be overwhelmed with the butt-puckering wave of nausea that would come from hearing "Slumlord" or "My Old Man's Bum" used as the musical background in a cell phone or luxury car commercial. For what it's worth, the people who matter know D.O.A. and *Hardcore '81* rule all hell. —Jeff Fox (Sudden Death)

DAMAGE DEPOSIT: *Do Damage: 7"* EP

With the great cover art of bloody croquet mallets held aloft in front of the White House, you know you aren't dealing with the Care Bears. It's ruthless DIY thrash helmed by Felix Von Havoc (ex-Code 13, *MRR* columnist, owner of Havoc Records). It tackles the gamut of how video games are encroaching hardcore, to Minneapolis actively trying to shut down its all-age venues, to not wanting "to wear a mouth guard and a nut cup" while playing and getting karate chopped by a new and wacky hardcore dance. The songs are literal and explicit — they read like a well-written scene report with twenty years of reflection seeped in. The music is breakdown-heavy, tight, and straight-ahead hardcore that puts hundreds of youth crews to shame. —Todd (Havoc)

DEAD KINGS, THE: *For All Those Hot Black Chicks*: CD

Baloney Shrapnel/ Scumfuck Confederacy-inspired rockin' grime, just not as mighty as Cocknoose, who does it like it's supposed to be done, god bless

'em. Interestingly enough, there's a quasi-interview snippet at the end of this disc with Beetlejuice, a wackpack regular from the *Howard Stern Show*. From what it says on the Dead Kings' website, it's from a VHS rant the band received a while back. Beet's asked what he thinks about The Dead Kings and it's pretty funny listening to his scatterbrained replies (as usual, if you are a regular listener of Howard's show). It's too bad the Kings didn't get a VHS transfer of that rant on their disc here — it would've been a cool CD-ROM. Loud rocking and a great sense of humor, to boot. Check these North Carolina boys out. —Designated Dale (The Dead Kings)

DEADLINE:

Back For More: CD

Not the old DC band, but rather some mighty fine pop-infused punk from a band that looks to be comprised primarily of skinheads. Their female lead singer has a great voice in a Becky Bondage kinda way, and the songs are speedy for the most part and hella catchy. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

DEADLY SNAKES, THE:

Ode to Joy: LP

Remember when Superman went to Bizarro World and everything was the opposite of what it was on Earth? Like, Superman was a bad guy, and people would say "Goodbye" instead of "Hello"? Okay, this is kind of the Bizarro World version of the Gories: white guys from Canada who know how to play their instruments. Imagine if the Bizarro Gories got Otis Redding to write their songs for them and Phil Spector decided to produce the resulting album instead of *End of the Century*. This would be that album. But since that description makes no sense, I'll say this: if you listen to this record between the first Seeds album and *Exile on Main St.* by the Rolling Stones, you won't notice much of a difference. —Not Josh (In the Red)

DEATH BY STEREO:

Into the Valley of Death: CD

Just this past April, I found out about the aural assault that is Death By Stereo, thanks to the suggestion of long-time fan Clint Weinrich, aka, The Torrez. You see, Torrez had the pleasure of growing up next to members of this band years ago, before Death By Stereo was the full-fledged, fuck-it-up machine they are today. So when he told me that DBS "isn't afraid of the rock," I was instantly curious to hear and see what these guys had in store for me. What they do have is ROCK, and plenty of it, cocks! This is the type of band that wipes its ass with those "nu-metal" bands (whatever the fuck that means) like Korn, Slipknot, Linkin Park, or Limp Bizkit. That's right, hotshot — eats them, shits them out, and wipes their ass with them. Metal with a heavy, deadly groove that's just as deadly being punk as fuck; the way it's supposed to be played. The way that would make a band like Motorhead or Slayer nod with approval, not because DBS sound like either one of the above-mentioned bands, but because DBS embraces metal with their own architectural thunder. Lyrics about fucked up people and fucked up things in a country we all still love to be a part of. I especially like the lyrics to "Shh, It'll Be Our Little Secret," a song about the exposed cover-ups regarding sex offenders within the Catholic church:

"Skeletons in your closet, you're not looking too smart/I should take your cock and shove it straight through your heart." Hear that, Fr. Mike Baker, you fucking scumbag? And I can't dig enough song titles like "I Wouldn't Kiss in Your Ear If Your Brain Was on Fire" or "You're a Bullshit Salesman with a Mouthful of Samples." If Sharon Osbourne is half the business genius that everyone goes on about, she'd get DBS signed up to the OzzFest and watch them obliterate the other acts on tour alongside them, night after night after night. In fact, I fucking double-dog dare her if she's reading this. Death By Stereo, dear readers — ask for them by name. —Designated Dale (Epitaph)

DIE MONITR BATTS:

Youth Controllers: CD

Imagine Le Shok playing no wave-inspired free jazz instead of ripping off the Screamers and you get the gist of what this is like. Makes me kinda wish I had a radio show, 'cause this is exactly the kinda stuff I would play to scare off anyone tuning in thinking that they're gonna hear the latest smash hit from Blink 182. Fuck, I don't know whether to keep it or send the fucking thing spiraling into the nearest wall. I guess it can be construed as a glowing review, because, even if it's for all the wrong reasons, I'm diggin' this disc quite a bit. Might even top my "Greatest Releases of 2003" list. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dim Mak)

DOA/THOR:

Are You Ready: CD

DOA: Although their opener, "Are U Ready" was pretty weak, their other five tracks are pretty strong, which is surprising considering how listless and uninspired their last release was. So far as I can tell, a few of these tunes are reworkings of older tunes, but they are pretty swell nonetheless. Thor: Remember seeing him bend a hunk of steel with his teeth once on a heavy metal video comp my friend Matt owned, which sent all in the room watching rolling on the floor in fits of hysterical laughter. That first impression has managed to stick with me, lo these sixteen years, making reviewing objectively his tracks here next to impossible. When he goes into a tune like "Gladiator Stomp (Arena Anthem Chant)," I feel the giggles percolating deep in my gut and, next thing I know, I'm rolling on the floor once again, gasping for breath and trying not to draw my wife's attention for fear that she'll have me locked up or something. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sudden Death)

DRAGONS: *Sin Salvation*: CD

Never heard so much as a note from these guys, but have heard good things about them, so I was looking forward to this listen. What I'm hearin' are jams rooted in the Thunders School of Punk, updated and charged with post-hardcore aggressiveness. The result is a band that could easily share a bill with bands like Smogtown and the Stitches and yet still turn some heads among those who prefer to slum strictly in the Scandinavian rock ghetto. While this style is usually not my cup of tea these days, thanks in no small part to the seemingly endless hordes of clone bands polluting the genre's gene pool, this particular release was pretty friggin' rockin'. —Jimmy Alvarado (Gearhead)

DREXEL: *The Inevitable Is Available*: CD

Hey Warped Tour, look out! Here comes Drexel. Hot bods are lookin' to buy! –Megan (Fork in Hand)

DROPKICK MURPHYS: *Blackout*: CD

The first Dropkick Murphys album, *Do or Die*, was an amazing album. I still listen to it. The five or six CDs they've released since then pale in comparison. Not only that, but they seem to be getting progressively worse. They have a good formula. It's fun to sing along with their anthems. The songs are catchy and tough, sometimes funny and sometimes poignant. They still take the best elements of the Pogues and the Clash and the Business and make it sound good. They're just not covering any new ground, and they're not developing as a band. If I heard this album and I'd never heard anything before by the Dropkicks or by any other band that sounds like the Dropkicks, I'd really like it. But I have heard *Do or Die* and I have heard all the bands that have influenced the Dropkicks and all the bands that the Dropkicks have influenced, and *Blackout* just sits in the middle of that pile. It's not bad. To tell the truth, I kinda like it as background music. Mostly, though, these guys are too talented to wallow in the mediocrity that they're wallowing in. –Sean (Hellcat)

DSB: *Pure Cultivation*: 7"

Now this is more like it.... Three more doses of Japanese hardcore with a healthy bit of metal in the mix. This time it works, mainly because there's much

more mania in their attack than on the *Battle into Invisible Zone* EP, and that makes all the difference. A nice solid boot to the noggin' here. –Jimmy Alvarado (Kangaroo)

DUDOOS, THE: *Specium Sommer*: CD

Am I looking at the back of the CD right? My contacts are old and dry but I can still see through them. It's say's Sound Pollution as the label on it. I was expecting a full blast beat hardcore punk attack. The home to Hellnation and other fast as shit, bugs hitting the windshield kind of punk. Thirty songs in twenty minutes kind of shit. Here Ken throws a fucking curve ball at everyone. He finds the least likely band from Japan to put out on his label. I was surprised to hear a band that sound like the Dickies, Hi-Standard, Toy Dolls, Wizo and the Queers all thrown together as one. Not so angry that your balls are sweaty kind of music, but tongue and cheek, fun and have a dance with your girl kind of music. Bubblegum pop punk that incorporates bad English mixed with Japanese that makes it hard not to crack a smile. I love all the stupid instruments that are added to make things even more cheesy. I can't get enough of this stuff. You can really feel that this band is having fun and people are going to get the message. They call their music *Poko Poko Punk Punkos*. Inventive in their description and spot on in the results. I need to drink large amounts of alcohol and pogo as high as I can to put head impressions in my ceiling.

–Donofthedeath (Sound Pollution)

EARACHES, THE: *Fist Fights, Hot Love*: CD

Step aside nay-sayers! The Earaches (formerly the Reckless Bastards) are one of the many fucking amazing bands out now. They have that perfect balance of garage punk in the vein of the Mummies (no organ, just the energy). The songs are power-driven without ever getting too fast that they lose form. "Used to Be a Loser" gets all reverby, which doesn't always work, but it does here. The song pulls off such a sleazy feel. The whole album is raw and just plain good. The only thing it leaves me wishing for is a tour. –Megan (Steel Cage)

EDDIE HASKELLS, THE: *It's Going Down*: CD-EP

Solid EP here with snot-induced, rock and roll-fueled jamming, ala Johnny Thunders, especially "Radio Video" and "Steal & Squeal." Hints of The Clash are heard on "It's Going Down," and it's a good thing. Extra-added fun for all is hidden at the end of this disc with a version of the Undertones' "Teenage Kicks," and the Eddie Haskell's do their part in covering it quite nicely. These guys need to make it down to LA for a coupla shows. Fans of the Spits and The Girls will dig 'em, most definitely. By the way – Eddie Haskell – wasn't he that pesky fuck on *Leave It to Beaver*? God, didn't you just wanna beat that Haskell kid down to the ground with a brick? Always kissing the asses of the parents on that show, thinking he's so sly and fucking slick. The kind of guy that would turn his own brother out for some chick, a genuine loudmouth that never

learned the phrase, "Snitches wear stitches." –Designated Dale (Hubcap N Wheel...no fucking address...dopes...<www.eddiehaskells.com>)

EL SOB: *Welcome to El Sob*: CD

Have you ever watched kid's educational TV? You know how sometimes they try to make a "hip" song about brushing your teeth or some other nonsense? That's what this sounds like, except the guy's voice is so bad it'd probably scare off the tykes. Hey, at least they're label's name describes their sound. –Megan (Abominable)

END OF THE WORLD NEWS: *Self-titled*: 7"

This is curious and bookish, but charming and listenable. The new Aaron Cometbus vehicle is an interpretation of Leon Trotsky's unfinished musical about his brief stay in New York, after being forced out of Europe and before he was killed in Mexico (suspected scenario: an ice pick through the ear). Along with Marx, Trosky was the guy who set up a lot of the fundamental theories on Communism, only to see it pan out in a way that not only horrified him, but went out of its way to silence him. This 7" begs the question: would Trotsky have written a musical that doesn't stray far from Pinhead Gunpowder, Astrid Oto, and Green Day formulation? In my world, sure, why not? It's better than a stuffy, overblown interpretation with too much makeup and too-tight cravats. Comes with instructional booklet. –Todd (Recess)

ENEMY YOU:
Video to Radio: 7"

I first came across this band on the Panic Button *Four on the Floor* comp, where Enemy You shared the disc with Screeching Weasel, Moral Crux, and the Teen Idols (each band contributing four songs). Right away, they were a guilty pleasure for me. I say guilty because they don't really break any new ground in the arena of pop punk. Still, they held their own with heavy hitters like Screeching Weasel and Moral Crux, and I figure that's justification enough for me to keep listening. They released a full-length on Panic Button, also, but I like snippets of Enemy You better than a whole album. A 7" is just right. This one has five songs, three of which are covers. The covers (all songs I've never heard before) are silly. "Video to Radio" is the best of the three. It adds a little bit of early eighties, Wall of Voodoo-style pop to the punk. "Hot Dogs Till You Die" is so stupid it's awesome. Side B has two original Enemy You songs, which are both pretty good. And, like I said, this is the best way to hear this band: five fun songs and on to the next record. —Sean (Geykido Comet)

EVEN IN BLACKOUTS: *Myths and Imaginary Magicians: CD*

Since I got this, I can't stop listening to it! Total pop punk – on acoustic guitars! And fear not! This still sounds like total rock and roll. Of course, with Mass Giorgini producing, how could it be otherwise? A bunch of guys and a girl singer, and even covers of "Hey Suburbia" and "Knowledge"! Granted, neither cover was super great, but any band that hasn't abandoned their love of Screeching

Weasel, Op Ivy, et. al for fear of being labeled uncool, is a friend of mine! This is Frosted Mini-Wheats! Basic folk set-up, with the frosted coating that we all know as punk rock! (Note to self: one day Todd and Sean will realize exactly how dumb my reviews are and replace me with Kurt Loder.) —Maddy (Lookout/Panic Button)

EXPLOSION, THE:
Sick of Modern Art: 2 X CD

One CD an EP of the Explosion, the other is an eleven-song sampler comp. Shifting slight gears from their full length, *Flash, Flash, Flash*, they move from the callused hands and blood and sweat of the working class and Boston hardcore, to more cerebral, slightly slower, more artful efforts. And it doesn't suck. Think of the gradual shift that Social Distortion made from establishing part of the Southern California punk archetype then slowly morphed into a more country, rockabilly firm without a complete divorce. All the initial elements are still there, just the priority and presentation are shifted around. With *Sick*, The Explosion have become slightly more rock – the lyrics are a little more abstract (which works to their benefit), the songs are less crew singalongs and more structured in and of themselves – and I like the transition. They sound more like a band playing for themselves instead of what they expect people think they should sound like. If you liked latter Lifetime, The Arsons, or any crisp, well-recorded modern hardcore (made by outsiders instead of football players), The Explosion are worth it. The comp's just icing on the cake. —Todd (Tarantulas)

FAVORS, THE:
Self-titled: CDEP

These guys are smart. Too old for a boy band, what to do? Put out this EP. They'll still get some tail from girls in the punk princess tank-tops, or the guys in the same get-up. Prettier than me on my best day. —Megan (Break-Up!)

FECES FOR WARPAINT: *You Can't Polish a Turd: demo: CD*

These eight songs were recorded on a four track. That's just fine, 'cause this is a demo. The songs are between hardcore and crust. Full on fast and ragging. No pretty melodies here. Reminds me of something from the early to mid '90s. Boy, these guys are pissed, too! Their lyrics are very hateful of the rich and what they do to the rest of society – not just to the people, but to the environment as well. I definitely liked this demo. Not only for the music but also for the lyrics. So just email these guys and I'm sure for a few \$ you could get this fine demo CD. A definite winner in my book. —Mike Beer (FFWP)

FEDERATION X: *X Patriot: CD*

Bradley Williams sings the praises of Fed-X, so I checked them out. They're a three-piece from Washington, but that's where it starts getting weird. The three pieces are drums and two guitars, both with four strings and played through bass amps. The result? A dirty sound that hooked me. It has a southern feel, even though they're about as far from the south as you can get in the States. I missed them their last time through LA. I won't make that mistake again. —Megan (Estrus)

FEEDERZ: *Vandalism: Beautiful as a Rock in a Cop's Face: CD*

The Feederz were a legendary eighties hardcore band. Lead singer Frank Discussion reformed this incarnation of the band, and we're all better for it. They have a very confrontational approach to punk rock (as you can see in the interview with them, conveniently placed within the pages of this issue of *Razorcake*), and it's easy to simply be offended by them. The trick is to go beyond that, to confront the issues that their lyrics force you to confront. This whole approach is what gives the Feederz their edge. But it would be a shame to discount them as just a message put to music. The music itself is solid. It's hard for me to avoid comparing them to the Dead Kennedys, and not just because Frank Discussion ran off with Jello Biafra's wife. Because Discussion also ran off with a handful of East Bay Ray-style riffs while he was at it. Apparently, he pocketed some DH Peligro drum sections, too, and put those beats on loan to Feederz's drummer, Ben Wah. And, from there, they built their own disjointed sound that simultaneously irritates you and makes you enjoy the irritation. If you've never heard the Feederz, I recommend starting with *Ever Feel Like Killing Your Boss*. After that, you'll just follow the natural progression to pick up this album. If you're thinking, c'mon, there's no way the Feederz could be as edgy and relevant as they once were, pick up this album and prove yourself wrong. —Sean (Broken Rekids)

FIRST STEP, THE: *Open Hearts and Clear Minds*: CD

Generally speaking, I hate mottoes. But the Discordians have a useful one: "Death to all fanatics." I mention this here because I recently read an article in some mainstream, Big-Five media conglomerate ad-paper about militant edgies showing their intemperance by roughing up those who don't share their taste for the temperance-heavy lifestyle. To those scared half-witted sheep I say: take your sex-starved pee hose and go fuck yourself. Now, it very well could be that the sXe gentlemen in The First Step are just as disapproving of the Neanderthal antics of those other edgies as I am; they may well be good eggs themselves. I have no way of knowing. Judging by the photos here, these guys wear the standard issue sXe outfit – complete with the nifty "X" wristwatches. They certainly sing about the same stuff as all the other straightedge bands. And like all real-life edgies, they possess that uncanny ability to defy the earth's gravitational pull and float with their guitars just a few feet above the ground. Creepy. I wish I knew how to do that, but my body's probably too weighted down with beer and sin and stuff. I'm not sure what to think. I like the music, but not the ideology. I think it was William James who once noted that religion is the "opiate of the masses" and I guess straightedge is too close to organized religion for me to feel comfortable about it. But I really do like the music. And, interestingly enough, I seem to like it the more beers I have. –Aphid Peewit (Live Wire)

FIYA: Self-titled: 7"

When the needle first drops on this slab of vinyl, it's easy to think, Oh no! Emo. It's arty. I won't lie to you. But it's interesting enough to hold my attention for twenty seconds or so, at which point the song blows up into exactly what I was hoping to hear: fucked up punk rock. But that doesn't last long, either. It starts to drift into something more. It's arty. I won't lie to you. But in a good way. Fiya have a lot in common with their fellow Gainesvillains, True North. The songs borrow a lot from Fugazi and Rites of Spring, but at the same time, they don't sound anything like all the crappy bands that have been inspired by Fugazi and Rites of Spring. And, not that you can discern a word from all the screaming, but if you read the lyrics, they're very intelligently written. This record is a surprise all the way through, and a highly recommended surprise at that. –Sean (Obscurist Press)

FUCKED UP: *Police*: 7"

This came out of left field for me, but I hear it's their third EP. Damn good 7" here. No fucking around. This is a perfect example of how a band can be good, fast, and loud. All of the power seems drawn from an anger towards police and government, but it's an anger fueled by cogent reasoning. Now, I know dick about local Toronto politics, but the liner notes have pictures and descriptions of their council members, the mayor, president of the auto workers union, and others, along with their less than civic-minded actions. Keep an eye out for these guys. –Megan (Deranged)

GEEKS, THE: *Dreamland in Machineland*: 7"

Strange piece of vinyl here. Two songs from 1982, courtesy of a band that apparently started playin' bebop in the late '60s and later added punk to their sound. What's it sound like, you ask? Imagine the Cows if Ornette Coleman was their chief songwriter and he was in a pissor of a mood. As can be expected, me likey lots. –Jimmy Alvarado (S-S)

GOOD RIDDANCE: *Bound by the Ties of Blood and Affection*: CD

Consistency is this band's trait. From heart-pounding hardcore numbers to melodic, pop ballads, GR full lengths are always a good listen for me. They keep the tempos varied and play with conviction. The songcraft has developed stronger from release to release as they continue to be a solid unit over time. Singer, Russ Rankin, puts his beliefs right on the table and is not afraid to put forth his opinion. The production is as tight and powerful as ever with the added benefit of recording once again at the Blasting Room with Bill Stevenson on the controls. Luke Pabich's guitars are crunchy and distorted enough to sustain its energy. Chuck Platt's bass sound is nice and punchy, mixed evenly to add that solid tone. David Wagenschutz's drumming is more forceful this time around and a new level of confidence seems to be achieved since he has been with the band some time now. Overall, another great release that will probably stay in my CD changer for a long time. –Donofthedeath (Fat)

GOVERNMENT ISSUE: *Strange Wine/Live at CBGB*: CD

Primarily a live set from this legendary band blessed with good sound and a nice mix of tunes spanning their entire career. The last three songs are studio reworkings of some of their older tunes, the best being a pretty thrashin' take of "I'm James Dean" and the worst being a sub-par version of "Teenager in a Box," which has none of the intensity of the original version. Serves as a nice, concise overview of their career for those who want to know what all the fuss is about but aren't willing or aren't financially able to invest in their two-volume discography –Jimmy Alvarado (Dr. Strange)

GRAFTON: *Blind Horse Campaign*: CD

The Cows rock out to Nashville Pussy. Loud, raucous, and definitely worth a spin. –Jimmy Alvarado (Dead Canary)

GUFF: *The Guff Is a Disaster EP*: CDEP

If you take the nice innocuous little name of this nice innocuous little pop punk band and dropped one of the "Fs" and then turned it around, you wind up with the word "Fug." When Norman Mailer's famous war novel *The Naked and the Dead* came out in the '40s, the publisher substituted the nonsense word "fug" for the word "fuck" – a word used frequently by the GIs in the novel. They did this so as not to risk offending any readers with a gentle constitution. In that same spirit, I think you could say that Guff is the "fug" of punk. Guff is nuttlessly inoffensive. Fug Guff. May the

rest of their days be spent stuck in a never-ending interview with the clod prince of banality, Carson Daley. –Aphid Peewit (Go Kart)

HARD-ONS: *Very Exeiting: CD*

After a few clunkers, these Aussie leg-ends have come back with a vengeance, leveling both barrels and blasting an unsuspecting public with yet another unholy melange of Ramones-and-Slayer-cover-the-Descendents goodness. These guys have not sounded this consistently good to these ears since their *Love is a Battlefield of Wounded Hearts* album more than a decade ago. Wisenheimer punk, sick with some of the tastiest pop hooks you'll hear anywhere, coupled with Marshall overdrive and the occasional grindcore rhythm to throw you completely off track just when you think you've got 'em pegged. Easily my favorite release this review cycle. Pick up a copy so's you can tell your kids you owned a copy of this soon-to-be-classic back when it came out. Oh, and while you're at it, toss them Blink 182 wastes of plastic away to make some room in your collection for some true greatness. –Jimmy Alvarado (Bad Taste)

HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE: *Patmos or Bust: 7"*

I was really surprised when this came in the mail. See, I'd written to Wrench, trying to get a review copy. Instead, I got a pretty cold email saying that they DID NOT put out this EP. I shrugged my shoulders, scratched my head, and just assumed that I must have read something wrong somewhere along the line. Then it came in. I looked at the label. I got

pissed. I put it on. I got happy. Man, HFOS are so damn good! I was lucky enough to pick up their full-length, *Idiotia Hyperactiva*, on the recommendation of Mr. Aphid Peewit. They're kind of a newer version of the Mummies, with tight black ski masks in place of wrappings. I also hear Dwarves and the Weirdos in there, just great stuff. Four songs make for a pretty beefy 7", but still leaves me wanting more. –Megan (Wrench)

HEROINE SHEIKS:

Siamese Pipe: CD

If you knew and loved the Cows (and if you could know and not love them, you've got some kinda aberration up in your skull), the Sheiks are like a cold forty after eight weeks on the wagon. The Cows were my favorite band for longer than any other band ever held that title; they were the perfect thing to find and grab with both fists when hardcore started to lose its sheen for me, and I'll suggest the same of the Heroine Sheiks: plenty of noise, a little velocity, and shovels full of retardation, assembled in a tricky and masterful way that nobody else can touch and that will take any comer. Norman Westberg's guitar is refined, often minimal and everywhere it needs to be, but Shannon's lyrics and delivery are the real edge on the blade: "went in the back room with my Coors Light" becomes in a later verse "went in the bathroom and clogged the pipe." In "Little Schoolgirl" he croons "I don't want to hurt your feelings/ I just want to lay down on top of you" (did Sonny Boy Williamson write it that way?). And if he isn't spitting some poetic gem, he's

whistling or hooting or blowing his venerable trumpet. If you think your musical diet is lacking something, it's probably this. –Cuss Baxter (Rubric)

HIPBONE SLIM AND THE KNEE-TREMBLERS:

Snake Pit: CD

The drummer from the Headcoats is what caught my attention. The sound convinced me to hang on to this one. Blues with a voodoo feel meets early rock. The vocals have a distant sound to them. There's a very mellow feel to the whole sound, but the guitars are what keep it strong. Vocals make me think of Ricky (not the later Rick) Nelson if he'd been a very dirty boy growing up. Lately, this has been the perfect wind-down music after a long day for me. –Megan (Voodoo Rhythm)

HORROR, THE:

First Blood: CD EP

Hyper-speed English hardcore courtesy of most of what were the Voorhees and a new singer. Vicious in sound and attack, as it should be. This copy of the disc's gonna get worn out soon. –Jimmy Alvarado (Chainsawsafety)

HORRORS, THE: *Vent: CD*

More bluesy rock from In The Red, this lot being a grungy and bombastic ride through the noisier side of the garage rock of the '60s, with shades of the Stones, the Gun Club and the Gossip (though not augmented with that lady's ferocious growl or almost-glimpsed boobies), and one of the guys is named Greg Cartwright. What the hell kind of name is that? –Cuss Baxter (In The Red)

INVERSIONS, THE:

Hung by the Phone b/w Domestic Disturbance: 7"

What else would you expect from Rapid Pulse? Fast rock and roll punk with influences from the Dead Boys to the Rip Offs on these two 45s! "Hung by the Phone" is the better of the two. The lead song sounds like a forgotten '70s punk hit! The B-side has one catchy song and another not as catchy song – but with handclaps! Coming in second place, "Domestic Disturbance" is still good, and reminds me of Wisconsin's own Catholic Boys at times. Plus, both records have a super minimal old school layout – just black with some neon stripes. Punk! This is Fruit Loops. Sure, Fruit Loops/RNR Punk has been around forever, but they're still, uh, yummy! –Maddy (Rapid Pulse)

JACK TRAGIC & THE

UNFORTUNATES: Coming

Down Like a Hammer: CD

So is Jack Tragic the wiry little bald dude with the guitar in the photos or the lurchy looking guy with the dress shirt and the MCS afro? I've never heard of this guy and it's making me a little nervous. Is he some overlooked '80s punk pioneer who I'm supposed to already know about? I know I kinda skimmed over the Go-Go's chapters in *We Got the Neutron Bomb*, but did I accidentally miss the parts about the legendary Mr. Tragic? Is this the review that's finally going to expose me for the unqualified blowhard boobhead that I am? Holy fuck, I probably should know something about this guy, if only cuz he claims to have spent some time in the late '80s writing porno rock songs – and, one would guess, sucking down

copious amounts of anything with alcohol in it – with the Mentor’s El Duce, an early role model of mine. Hmm, let’s see... kind of Germ-sy in spots, a bit metal in others... this isn’t the most vicious head-splaining stuff out there, but it fucking rocks with surprisingly solid song writing and a healthy snarl that doesn’t sound the least bit affected. I don’t know who’s behind Bacchus or just where the hell they’re digging up old treasures like this Jack Tragic disc and the equally good *Live from the Masque* comp, but I hope they keep it up. –Aphid Peewit (Bacchus Archives)

JR EWING: *Ride Paranoia*: CD

Do today’s kids even know who JR Ewing was? I think I actually stopped watching *Dallas* the summer before the season they revealed who shot JR; I don’t know when that was, but it was a long fucking time ago. More on target, though, do today’s kids know who the Jesus Lizard was? Because this JR Ewing, with the bass in the driver’s seat a good deal of the time and the guitar running all around it, resembles that Touch & Go band, with a stern ‘00s update after the fashion of the Locust and that breed. I gotta say, the initial few listens didn’t grab my lapels too hard but subsequent plays in the course of trying to pin down something tangible have burrowed into my appreciation center, even the moody, minor-key parts, which is rare. One thing I still don’t get, though: they seem to be from Norway (recorded there, plus names like Mokkelbost and Snekkestad) and the guy writes better fucking lyrics in English than ninety-five percent of the writers in this country (not too many rhymes, however, if that’s what you look for. And no cop songs). –Cuss Baxter (Gold Standard Laboratories)

KILLS, THE: *Fuck the People*: 7”

Fuck the people is right. Rough Trade made a fortune selling Smiths records to all those sweater-wearing college boys but you would never know by looking at the packaging of this 7”. Not even a plain white sleeve with screenprinted info. Just one of those paper inner sleeves housing this ONE SONG seven-inch. Yes, one song. A song that is supposedly going to be on their upcoming full-length. And I paid money for it. That shows you how dumb I am. As for the song itself, it’s pretty good. Allison from Discount makes full use of her sultry voice over the kind of stripped-down hipster blues that I don’t listen to because I can listen to the Gories and not have to deal with some hipster attitude. Bonus: “Limited to 500” is short for “Sweater-wearing college boys will pay lots of money for this on eBay in six months.” I can’t wait for *Spin* to do a write-up of this band. –Not Josh (Rough Trade, no address)

KISS ME DEADLY: *Travel Light*: CD

It’s a good thing that I have laundry to do tonight because this underproduced, vaguely screamo makes me want to turn off my stereo for a few hours. Dudes, dynamics and vocals that sound like one loaf pinching do not necessarily automatically result in a good record, nor do they necessarily result in a record worth hearing. Take your goddamned photos of sunsets and clouds and this review back to your music teachers and tell every last

one of them that they failed to impart any useful information and should stop before inflicting any more damage than they already have. –Puckett (Blue Skies Turn Black)

KNOCKOUT PILLS, THE: *Self-titled*: LP

Sometimes, it’s hard for me to let go. I know, I know, The Weird Lovemakers are done. They’ve fractured: one guy actually getting a girlfriend, the Radio Reelers, and The Knockout Pills. Whereas the Weird Lovemakers were, gloriously, all over the map, the Knockout Pills have their feet steadfastly planted in harmony-rich ‘60s rock, like The Zombies and The Animals. While these guys have a healthy dose of respect to give the songs a true charge, they aren’t so respectful that it seems like a merely coloring in of existing musical shapes. Nuts get kicked. Instruments get whacked. So, yeah, there’s some understandable similarity to the New Bomb Turks, but not too much to think these guys don’t have brains and extensive record collections of their own. Ultimately, what’s pleasant about this LP is how listenable it is. When it gets mellow and a harmonica gets broken out in “Confused,” it burns slowly without getting sleepy. When they pick it up, your ear gets humped. Not to sound like Leonard Nimoy narrating *In Search Of...*, but as a dawn that casts long shadows slowly gives away to mid day, when a band has to stand up by themselves regardless of their predecessors, The Knockout Pills pull out their own revolvers, and prove themselves. Although the album didn’t stun me right off the bat, with each successive listen, it gets deeper and stronger. Enthusiastic thumbs up. –Todd (Dead Beat)

LANTERNJACK, THE: *Look Alive*: CD

I want to be fair to this album and give it constructive criticism, but my first reaction to the music is to just be mean with my review. So I kept listening to this album, and the more I listened to it, the meaner I felt. It’s tough. The Lanternjack play very radio-friendly rock’n’roll, and by “radio friendly,” I mean slow. It’s on tempo with, say, Danzig or the Cult’s *Sonic Temple*. The choruses are repeated a lot, which is okay sometimes, but when they do it every song, it gets tiring. The singer really believes he can sing, which is probably nice for his self-esteem, but it’s not good for me. I prefer vocals to be more like an extra instrument and less like the whole focus of every song. So here’s my constructive criticism: play your songs twice as fast and half as long. Take out everything that sounds remotely like a guitar solo – especially the five minute long guitar solo in “Come Around” (well, okay, it’s not literally five minutes long, but some of my favorite Kid Dynamite songs literally don’t last as long as that guitar solo). Or you can keep the songs exactly as they are and send your review copies to a heavy metal magazine. Because, to be honest, The Lanternjack don’t lack talent. This album is fine for what it is. It just lacks any resemblance the punk rock I love. –Sean (Low Down)

LET IT BURN: *Hello Good Friend*: CDEP

Hell yeah. Match hardcore power (break out the chainsaw guitars and anaconda-thick bass), a sixth sense for harmony

(it’s catchy as fuck), and front it with singer who can belt it loud and clear (no Cookie Monster or mush mouthing) and you’ve got me not only buying your next record but seeking the back catalog. Be able to zap out a Bowie cover of “Holding On” without tipping the pansy-o-meter, and you’ve got yourself a fan. Let It Burn are along the lines of current excellent melodic hardcore that’s being belted out on the East Coast by Go! For The Throat, and The Curse. To put an interesting twist, however, the instrumentation seems to be right out of Orange County. I hear bright, loud Crowd guitar, Smogtown galloping tempos, and Smut Peddler-type drumming. Curious. This EP’s a six-song collection of comp tracks, dropped balls, and imports. I just wish they would have kept the Rolling Stones cover as a joke that never burned into plastic. That track alone saves it from the wholesale praise I was willing to heap on it. –Todd (Alone)

LOGH: *The Rising Sun*: CD
Cinematic, soundtrack music for a depressing black and white independent film. –Donofthedeat (Bad Taste)

LOST SOUNDS: *Demos II*: CD
The Lost Sounds have me. Staple together the seemingly incongruous elements of new wave, garage rock, psych, and distorto keyboard while not making it sound like piss. They make it sound like a cyborg-electric monster that’ll sometimes crush you and sometimes fuck you like you’ve never been fucked. These are demos spanning a four-year period. It’s cool to hear and read about how each of these twenty-one songs (plus intro and outro bits) were made. (Jay found a damaged saxophone in a dumpster and played it on a lark on “Energy Drink and the Long Walk Home.”) But, if you’re looking for a firm introductory handshake to the band, I’d go for the almost flawless *Rat’s Brains and Microchips*. If you’ve already got that and want to peek behind the curtain, don’t mind raw production, and want to see how Siouxi Sioux would have sounded if she fronted a battle-scarred Svartovron, by all means, this is a whiz-bang of a CD. –Todd (On/On Switch)

**MAD PARADE:
Bombs and the Bible: CD**
Well, it looks like another lineup change has taken place, with Ron out again and new guy Paul taking over bass duties. Musically, they continue along on the same path they’ve always trod upon, namely older English punk influences crossed with early ‘80s LA sensibilities. If it ain’t broke, why fix it, I guess. Included here is a tasty cover of the Boomtown Rats’ “I Don’t Like Mondays,” as well as fourteen other tracks that stand up well against their “classic” material. Seeing as I’ve considered myself a Mad Parade fan since my band Six Gun Justice played with ‘em at the Cathay on a “dollar night” bill back in 1983, and have remained so through many years and many shared bills since, I can say that I’m mighty satisfied with what’s coming outta my speakers right now. –Jimmy Alvarado (Dr. Strange)

MAGGOTS, THE: *Let’s Go in ‘69 b/w 50 Gallon Bladder*: 7”
Not to be confused with the highbrow lot who brought you “Tammy Wynette,” this

crew is full-blooded Swedish garage rockers who enjoy adorning their record sleeves with Mopar™ products and exciting toy race tracks. And, while this does issue them a certain, shall we say, “baggage claim” in this day and age, they deftly spin Cheerios™ on any perceived shortcomings-in-waiting by recording with astounding ferocity and “absolutely no overdubs!” – meaning that not only can they rock your Groove unlaut like the Von Zippers covering the Flamin’ Groovies covering Chuck Berry’s “Let Me Rock,” but they can also make you think of the Urinals’ “Go Away Girl”/“Sex” recording session while doing it. LOOK, MOM! GUILT-FREE SWEDISH MOPAR™-ROCK! A-side’s a corker, b-side is more rockabilly-esque, yet still endearing – if only because the guitar solo is oddly reminiscent of that in “Mule Skinner Blues” by the Fendermen, of which I am quite fond. I’m gettin’ the album. BEST SONG: “Let’s Go in ‘69” BEST SONG TITLE: “50 Gallon Bladder” FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: One of the Fendermen looked at my Ibanez Iceman when I brought it into his son’s music store and said it was cool. –Rev. Nørh (Gearhead)

**MANIC HISPANIC:
Mijo Goes to Jr. College: CD**
A philosophical scenario popped into my head while listening to this. Gang life is a subculture that strays away from the mainstream. Punk is also a subculture. What if punk was started by Latino gangs back in the day? Like skinheads have skinhead music, street punks have street punk/oi, and so on. Music for their backyard gang parties played by gang members. Songs were ingrained in stone through the years and became standards through the years. Now those bands have disappeared through the years as time has passed. But the songs are still alive. Like a good Mariachi band, you book them for parties to play music you know. Manic Hispanic becomes that band that belts out the covers like it was their own. Every song that was a classic is now being re-introduced to a new set of gangsters. The legacy lives on. Well, that wasn’t the scenario. But they do take classic punk songs and make them their own. This time around, The Damned, The Clash, The Germs, NoFX, Stiff Little Fingers, Ramones, D.I., GBH, Sham 69, The Dickies, Misfits, TSOL and The Vandals get the Manic Hispanic treatment. After numerous listens, you would believe that cholos and vatos were responsible for these old school tracks. The tracks are so good by this assemblage of talented and veteran musicians that I sometimes forget that these are covers. You also need to see them live. They put on one of the best shows I’ve seen in years. –Donofthedeat (BYO)

MARKED MEN, THE: *Self-titled*: CD

Some serious power pop-inspired punk from these guys, which, considering the label, wasn’t quite what I was expecting. Like the FM Knives, who draw heavily from the Buzzcocks, these guys are obviously draw more than their share of influence from bands past, yet there’s enough energy and conviction to their approach to keep things sounding fresh and stave off any “been there, done that” feelings. –Jimmy Alvarado (Rip Off)

MEA CULPA:***They Put You in a Mask: CD***

Our enemies have gotten much smarter. So must we. Meet Mea Culpa, a melodic political punk band that just raised the bar. Not only do they have carefully worded and literate lyrics, they damn well know how to rock. There's very little screeching and very little middle finger rock posturing. It's a perfect melding of mid-tempo '77 punk, Phil Ochs, the Pogues, Randy, and The GC 5, all bundled and infused with George Orwell's concepts of governmental and corporate control. Here's a sample: "And all the public schools get privatized/... When Nike owns your high school don't be too surprised/ to see sections of the history books on labor disappear." What that all means is that you can snap your fingers to all the songs, there's great variance, it's very tuneful, and they revel in thinking themselves through many troubling situations. They come across how I think Howard Zinn would be if he fronted Stiff Little Fingers. Much more smart and realized than the loads of "kill the pigs, see ya in the pit!" stuff we get. Instead, take, for instance, the song "Good Cop/Bad Cop." It tackles the dehumanizing of cops from the inside. Most public servants, on one hand, know they're cogs, but when they're thrust into volatile situations (like riots) they can chose to flex the power their badge ensures or exercise their compassion. In the end, it's the first punk song I know of that has a cop killing another cop, not because he sees the right of the rioters, but the wrongness and amorality of the system he's committed to protect. Great CD. -Todd (Empty)

MENSEN: *Oslo City: CD*

I'm not in a band, but if I were, I'd be intimidated as hell by all these Scandinavian bands who, as a rule, play their instruments way better than most Americans. Then, Mensen comes along and proves that, not only do Scandinavians kick our ass, but Scandinavian women do. *Oslo City* is the follow up to *Delusions of Grandeur*, which was a near perfect album that was only soiled by the Rolling Stones cover at the end. *Oslo City* is not so soiled. Not only is it full of rock'n'roll that's so laden with hooks and energy that it's impossible to listen to without shaking at least one part of your body, but I no longer have to scramble to shut off my stereo at the first few notes of "Jumping Jack Flash." It's an amazing album. If you've ever asked yourself, what would the Hives sound like if Penelope Houston from the Avengers sang for them? You could pick up this Mensen album and answer yourself with a good, solid, who gives a fuck? -Sean (Gearhead)

MIDNIGHT CREEPS:***Doomed From the Get Go: CD***

Don't get me wrong: I am as big a fan of the Un-Deep in music as the next be-antler-helmeted geek. However, let the record show that Un-Depth does, in fact, come equipped with a handful of core tenets and axioms; foremost among them is the High Truth that bands which are Un-Deep should also make songs that are Un-Long. A good two minute song can't necessarily be made into a good three minute song, a good one minute song likely can't be made into a good two-minute song, and a good one

minute song sure the hell can't be made into a good three-minute song. Average length for these eleven tracks is approximately 2:54 - that is to say, five seconds longer than the longest track on any of the first three Ramones albums, and about a buck-two-eighty too long for songs like "I'm a Cunt," "Menstrual Institution" and "Toiletbowl Suicide." That said, I would like to point out that it has been only through sheerest force of will and noblesse oblige that this review consists of something other than the phrase "I WANNA MAKE BABIES WITH THE SINGER!" endlessly repeated, even though she sings kinda like Theo from the Lunachicks' tomboy little sister in heat (that is to say, vocally walking a not-always pleasurable tightrope between appropriate vileness and inappropriate technical pretension) and, not surprisingly, uses "your" instead of "you're." I dunno, I always kind of made it a point to hang around girls who sing lyrics like "I'm so fucking horny That I can't walk straight," although I suppose that's mitigated somewhat by "Come here lick me eat shit" and "I'm gonna bash that bitch's face in Mix her brains with my puke." Sounds kind of like what I imagine those Toilet Boys records I got as promos that I never got around to listen to might sound like, but, obviously, that's highly speculative at this point. BEST SONG: "Doomed from the Get Go" BEST SONG TITLE: "I'm a Cunt" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Bass player plays a Rickenbacker™, which seems highly incongruous. -Rev. Nørb (Rodent Popsicle)

MINOR THREAT:***First Demo Tape: CDEP***

Apparently, Ian Mackaye found this original demo tape when he was doing stuff for the Dischord box set. After the box set was done, Dischord remixed this tape and released it on CD. The songs sound really good, considering that they come from a tape that was buried in a box somewhere for twenty years. *First Demo Tape* has pretty much the same songs as the *Filler 7*" (minus "Filler" and "Screaming at a Wall," plus "Stand Up" and "Guilty of Being White"). It's good to have a reason to listen to Minor Threat again. They're undoubtedly one of the all-time best punk bands and they're the band that first got me into punk rock. Still, you can get similar versions of all of these songs on *Complete Discography*. This EP is solely for Minor Threat fanatics (like, uh, me). -Sean (Dischord)

MIRACLE CHOSUKE: *The 7/8 Wonders of the World: CD*

Devo with attention-deficit disorder. -Jimmy Alvarado (Dim Mak)

MISTREATERS, THE:***Playa Hated to the Fullest: CD***

I wasn't sure how I'd feel about this. I checked out their website and, well, they had one too many beards for my liking (Oh, how scientific I am!). It just made me suspicious. What are they trying to hide? I'm still sure there's something, but they're sure as hell not hiding their ability to rock. From the first notes to the last, this packs a punch. His vocals get very Blag-y on their cover of "Good Thing." Throughout the rest, everything is raw and bluesy mixed with power. I

bet they'd be killer live. I just wish you could hear the bass more. It's kind of hidden in the recording. —Megan (Estrus)

MONKEYWRENCH, THE/IMMORTAL LEE COUNTY KILLERS, THE: Split: 7"

The Monkeywrench are fucking awesome. I'm not a huge fan of supergroups, but christ, any time you can get Mark Arm singing in front of Tom Price and Tim Kerr's guitars, well then, my friend, you got a song that's kicking my ass. They do just one song here: a cover of 13th Floor Elevators' "Levitator." I don't know the original, but this cover is amazing. The kind of song you listen to twice before flipping the record. As for the Immortal Lee County Killers, well, they prove that white boys can play the blues. All it takes is a decade of heavy drinking, a total disregard for all the classic rock that fucked up the blues for about forty years, some mighty fine slide guitar, and all the requisite power and distortion that comes with being a punk band. They do one song here, a cover of RL Burnside's "Goin' Down South." Which begs the question, if the Killers are from Alabama, where do the go when they're "goin' down South"? —Sean (Bronx Cheer)

MOTARDS: *Stardom*: CD

I was so excited about this CD that I could barely rip open the plastic to play it. I'm a huge Motards fan, but, when a band breaks up something like eight years ago and they only have two albums, you start to venture into territory where you can only listen to the same two albums so many times, despite their

greatness. So, now that it's eight years after the demise of one of punk's greatest trashy rock'n'roll bands, Mortville has given us this collection of outtakes and songs from long-out-of-print seven inches. *Stardom* covers some early Motards ground, when they weren't afraid to slow things down a wee bit, and it thrusts through their later work, all the way up to beautifully fucked up covers of the Dwarves and of Joan Jett's "Bad Reputation." In between, it's pure Motards. A little empty spot in my life has now been filled. I'm so happy to have new Motards songs to put into regular rotation. —Sean (Mortville)

MUMBLER: *The Winter of Our Discontent*: 7"

Weird things lead me to pull records out of the slush pile. I saw the title of this one, which could either be a self-indulgent, whiny emo title, or could be a reference to one of Steinbeck's greatest novels. Then, when I see it's on a record label that's most likely named after Steinbeck's hometown, I'm sold. Well, the good news is that it's not emo. Not even close. It doesn't really have anything to do with Steinbeck, but the first song is called "Free Brewery Tour," which is good in a whole other way. So what does it sound like? At first listen, it came across as pop punk, but there was something in it that kept me listening. Something a little more raw and a little more sincere. The vocals are nerdy and gruff at the same time, and the drums really power the songs ahead. It's like these guys learned that the secret behind Screeching Weasel had something to do with Dan Panic's drums, and they decided that, if they were gonna borrow from the pop punk mas-

ters, then they'd have to look to the back of the stage. This is their first release, and it's not a bad one at all. —Sean (Salinas)

NEW CHRIST, THE: *We Got This*: CD

This features the former lead singer of Radio Birdman. As can be expected, much of what's on this is Iggy-infused rock/punk in much the same vein as his previous, legendary band, and much of it is top-notch. —Jimmy Alvarado (Smog Veil)

NITZ, THE: *Kill You to Death*: 7"

You'd think the crossroads of the Dwarves and Zeke would be a barren place where no musical seed could find any purchase. It's been well-trod land with few inspired results. But, inside the Blag'y vocal bad touch, the speed injection to the breakneck guitar, power stroke drums, and burned rubber bass, The Nitz manage to chuggle and strangle out eight songs that sound great on their own. It's a nice kick to the balls by a band that doesn't feel like they're chained to the back of the truck of their influences. —Todd (Reptilian)

NOFX: *War on Errorism*: CD

I guess I'm a Johnny-come-lately. I'm jumping on the bandwagon; my opinions have changed and I have become a converted fan. This is the best release I have heard from Fat Mike and Co. Even from their early beginnings, I have by-passed the band. I have skipped shows, not purchased releases and not paid attention. I guess it's an old guy thing, like old school versus new school. But I'm a big enough

person to admit that I can change my mind. Give me a valid argument, I can be swayed. I have been swayed and truly enjoy this release. The political songs are food for thought interspersed in the mix of tracks with their brand of humor. I especially like the reminiscing songs of his early memories of the scene. It brings back memories of times long gone with the old school references he uses to color the songs like "13 Stitches," "The Separation of Church and Skate," and "We Got Two Jealous Agains." The songs, at least to me, are more charged and have a more hardcore sound. The style is the same, but with more venom pushing it in your face. The added CD Rom videos was what initially won me over. I really enjoyed the video for "Franco Un-American." I guess I should have been paying more attention in the past. —Donofthedeat (Fat)

NONE MORE BLACK: *File Under Black*: CD

From what I read, the singer is the former singer for Kid Dynamite. I have never listened to the latter band but heard good things from other Razorcakers. The bass player does double duty by also playing in Kill Your Idols. That band I have heard here and there, and really enjoyed what I did hear. So this band has two brownie points going for them. Musically, the band stays in the mid-tempo arena and tends to lean to a more rock vein. Not one to hold its punches, they do throw in a lot of melody to keep a foot tapping. The vocals are scratchy and gruff, but not out of tune. The rest of the band complements the vocals and shimmies its way through the songs. Definitely a release that you have to listen to multiple times

to see if you like it. With more listens, I find it more and more appealing. —Donofthedeath (Fat)

**ONION FLAVORED RINGS:
*Used to It: LP***

I put this record on the turntable and proceeded to pogo around my too-small-to-accommodate-pogoing apartment and it was all fun and games until I crashed into my bike and woke up the neighbors. If you have a full range of motion in all four of your limbs, get this and you will most likely do the same except for the crashing part. —Not Josh (S.P.A.M.)

OPERATION LATTE THUNDER / ARE YOU FUCKING SERIOUS: *The Kitchen Split: 7"*

Operation Latte Thunder: A funny song title, "Point Your Compass in the Direction of Fun," whip-smart lyrics about being in a band; "sardined in a van," and "you can't be homesick when the cure's right beside you," while referencing Lifetime all add up to a good listen. I've been hearing the word "screamo" a lot lately, and I'm not sure what it's supposed to mean. If it's a couple of dudes yelling really well, over instruments you can see chip their paint when the vinyl spins, sign me up. OLT mix shades of Guyana Punch Line, where everything's going off, but in the same direction so it doesn't sound like mud, along with good, old fashioned audio destruction by guys I suspect have a lot of marbles rolling around in their noggins. Are You Fucking Serious: Have the best song title this rotation: "Cows Go: Moo, Pig Go: You're Under Arrest." They're blunt (SUVs, malls, cops = bad / ripping it up = good), owe a lot to GBH and a

poor man's Iron Maiden (think crusty not-metal-afraid, speedy punk), and have a good song about washing dishes, but lack the extra ooom pa pa that Operation Latte Thunder packs. —Todd (Mis En Place)

ORPHANS, THE: *Chinatown b/w Moscow Massage: 7"*

Two blood-stained cuts from the best punk band in LA currently without a label. Take the early desperation, delusion, and stripped rawness of Dangerhouse (Eyes, Bags, Weirdos, Dils) and titty twist it, so it bruises up nice, purple, and immediate. With Jenny at the vocal helm, it's even parts of chopping you into little bits and stolen, smearing kisses. These two songs measure up to their loop-de-loop live show, which I highly recommend. The packaging is immaculate — bloody fingerprints on the dust sleeve, a red bloop on clear vinyl, and great graphics on the cover. A keeper. —Todd (Kapow)

PAINT IT BLACK: CVA: CD

Although the salt is still in on my cheeks from crying about Kid Dynamite's demise, Dr. Dan Yemin and skin punisher Mr. Dave Wagenschutz have resurrected a leaner, meaner, tougher unit, this time with Dan taking the lead vocal duties. Gone are the tuned melodies. In their place: chiseled and pissed-off songs reminiscent but not reflexive to Minor Threat, Gorilla Biscuits, and Youth of Today, seamlessly updated to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with The Panic and American Nightmare. The spine and conviction to this whole thing, I believe, is what makes it stand out. Both Dan and

Dave have been around for quite a while. They are well past the time it's acceptable to be complete burnouts with hands out for a paycheck or a windbag curmudgeons saying today's youth don't get it. Yet, their chops continue to be refined to harder blows and the lyrics continue to explore new realms instead of reclining into a comfy chair of complacency. Thumbs up. —Todd (Jade Tree)

PEPPERMINTS, THE: *Sweet Tooth Abortion: CD*

Like a rusty hanger through your earhole, The Peppermints scrape up some good damage. The lady who sings on this sounds like she's being stabbed in a B-movie all the way through it, which I think is pretty awesome. Think of the Cows without the horns, humping to the most interesting drumming of the Screamers and then corner it while rubbing Fleshes in its face and sniffing some soiled underpants. It's where art meets fuck meets shit feedback fest. It's a wild ride, not so good for traffic unless you're looking for a fight, but great for clearing out a room. Made by, I suspect, people who know how to handle their drugs. Oddly endearing. Suggested. —Todd (Pandacide)

PRIZEFIGHT: Self-titled: CD

I want so badly to be wrong about bands, I can taste it. As soon as I saw the junior high art-project cover and the song titles that look like titles of really dripsy poems penned by Maya Angelou, I felt that sick feeling like when you find a butt hair on your toothbrush. This thing just screamed "emo" and I hadn't even taken the CD out of the jewel case yet. But I hoped to

be proven wrong. And lo and fucking behold, the first song "Happy Fun Ball" ripped out from the speakers and brought out full-blown visions of *Slip*-era Quicksand in my head and I got excited. The second song dipped a bit, but still sounded like a mix of Quicksand and late '90s Integrity. Maybe this will finally be the band to make me wrong, I thought. But no. If this CD would have been only one song long — even two — I would've given this an embarrassingly glowing review. But you fooled me. By song three I felt stupid and hopelessly right. I wasn't wrong again. Fuck. Why do they continue to torture me? —Aphid Peewit (Loud + Clear)

PSEUDO HEROS: *Prison of Small Perception: CD*

The Pseudo Heros churn out some pretty decent fare here, some of it calling to mind a heavily-peppered nod to Hüsker Dü, and that sits well with yours truly. Not to say the whole nineteen cuts here sound like the above mentioned, 'cause they don't. The 'Heros have also landed over half a dozen familiar faces of punk's past to collaborate here on some songs. Just who all did they work with, you ask? Here's a few to wet yourself over, fanfuck: Dave Smalley (Dag Nasty, Down By Law), John Stabb (Gov. Issue), Jerry A. (Poison Idea), and Lee Dorian (Napalm Death), to name a few. You want to know the rest? Buy the fucking CD, cocks. As far as straight-up 'Heros cuts here, my faves are "I Know What You Need" and their take on B.O.C.'s "Burnin' for You." Don't be a lying fuck and say you have no idea who B.O.C. are, 'cause I see you singing along, you Soft White Underbelly bitch of a liar. Got you. —Designated Dale (Go-Kart)

RADIO REELERS:
Rockin' Sound: LP

The Radio Reelers are a new band that has Hector from the Weird Lovemakers in it. A couple of the other guys in Radio Reelers were also in kinda big, Bay-area punk bands, but I forgot which ones. It doesn't matter. What matters is the music. These guys play unapologetic rock'n'roll in the same vein as the Rip-Offs, only cleaner. The songs are simple, three chord beasts, amped up to get your toes tapping. The lyrics don't really go beyond the basic "S-H-A-K-E-I-T, Shake it," or "You can't be my baby if you don't wanna rock'n'roll" or "I got it in for you (repeat 7X)." Not the deepest stuff in the world, and the more I listen to it, the more shallow it seems. But, I gotta admit, it'll get me shaking my ass. And, for whatever reason, this record has been getting a lot of spins around my turntable lately. Some days, a simple song is all you need. —Sean (Radio Blast)

RANDY: Welfare Problems: CD

Damn, they've come a long way from *No Carrots for the Rehabilitated* ten years ago. I was worried that Sweden's Randy would mellow off the socialist politics and full-tilt scronking off the last burner, *The Human Atom Bombs*. No worries there. Randy retain their uncanny ability to make what sounds like songs made in the '50s, gleefully scorch them on a Sonics '60s burner, bounce them up with '70s Ramones punk, harden them with a dash of '80s hardcore, slash and dash in some keyboards, and mix it all together in a soulful way that seems downright fun and natural. They're also a band that's always greater than the sum of its parts.

It's hard not to dance when they're pointing out some serious problems to governmental structures. Thumbs up to a considerably underrated band that I'm amazed isn't much larger. —Todd (Epitaph)

RAW POWER:

You Are the Victim: CD

This is Raw Power's debut, originally released in 1983 and pretty hard to come by. I think it's the first time on CD. Personally, it's my favorite period of Raw Power. Couple it with *Screams from the Gutter*, and you've got yourself some grade-A hardcore listening. These Italians were and are (they're still active and touring) part of the international hardcore scene, very much in line with, but not copying, MDC, Minor Threat, DOA, and Black Flag. This early on, their metal influences were slight-to-occasional soloing and what you have is archetypal, pissed-off, full-force, raw and perfect hardcore that bands, twenty years after, have still yet to top. Raw Power emerged at a time when hardcore was so far off the radar screen and its fans were so rabid and dedicated, that their influence was truly worldwide and soaked up in the States with relish. They had tracks on the influential BCT tapes, *MRR's Welcome to 1984* comp, and the *Rat Music for Rat People* comp. As a bonus, there's live video footage, a slew of demos, interviews, poster art, and photos. If you didn't want to spend the clink on getting the original vinyl, fear scratching it if you already own it, or want a well-packaged glimpse at some important punk roots, this is a great way to do it. —Todd (Soulforce)

RED SATYRS: Self-titled: 7"

I'm got a soft spot for non-Fonzie rock that has rockabilly twinges made by guys who don't look like they're modeled after Bowser from Sha Na Na. The Red Satyrs have a similar power to The Starvations and Throw Rag. The music's swampy, twisted, and owes a bit to the Cramps. It reverbs and gets surfy wet at the edges, but at the core is undeniably fine songwriting that doesn't rely on obvious barbeaten-to-death chops or blurring speed. It lets the darkness, blood, and semen seep in, and before you know it, you're the host and the infection's spread. —Todd (THD)

ROLLING BLACKOUTS:

Add Vice: 7"

Trash punk with a singer who sounds like he's on the verge of losing control, which is a definite plus. A double bill with these guys and the Gloryholes would be a dangerous event, indeed. Recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.kapow.com)

RUBBER CITY REBELS:

Pierce My Brain: CD

Smog Veil is known for serving up high quality rock and roll. This release is no exception to the rule. You get twelve tracks of great music that is definitely punk rock. Influence from the Sex Pistols, Ramones and other great legendary punk bands can be heard in this CD. Don't get me wrong, it's only an influence. The music is still very original. There is even an original tribute to song for Stiv from The Dead Boys, entitled "Dead Boy." To put this baby to bed, I say: Good band, good production, good packaging, good label. If you're a fan of

punk rock plain and simple... GET THIS! —Mike Beer (Smog Veil)

RUDE PRAVO:

Non Mu Pento: CD

Italian street punk that is musically reminiscent of mid-period DOA coupled with lyrics that, even the sometimes stilted English translations provided in the booklet, are quite good, tackling the Vatican, WTO protests, rock stars and the "keeping up with the Joneses" mentality, to name a few. A nice surprise here. —Jimmy Alvarado (KOB)

SAVIORS, THE: Ruby Gloom b/w Recipe for Disaster: 7"

The singer is a boy but looks like a girl, the first side sounds like later Replacements or the Lemonheads or something lame and late-'80s like that, and the second side revs it up a tiny bit, like a lawnmower at a stock car race. A little tiny bit. —Cuss Baxter (Rapid Pulse)

SCORE ONE FOR THE FAT

KID: Plan B Is for Suckers: CD

They must've thought that recording this would make womyn-types think that they're these sensitive guys, so that they could get otherwise unattainable lovin'. Good lord I hope that's why they did it. —Megan (Losing Blueprint)

SCOTCH GREENS, THE / THE IRISH BROTHERS: Split 7"

The Scotch Greens: A porch riot, replete with devastating banjo. Yep. Banjo. A band has to be great for me not think they're using that little, round-butt guitar ironically, and the Scotch Greens do just that. My ears hear ultra-confident, believable punk/bluegrass music displaying

hummable songs that make me want to slap my knee with one hand and drink from a passed jug with the other. And not in a hokey, Hee Haw way, either. Good times. The Irish Brothers: Modern honky-tonk by way of Reverend Horton Heat with a half a jigger of Throw Rag strangeness clacked on the side of its skull. Ain't gonna give you a wedgie for putting it on the jukebox, but would never put it on myself. Kudos to the Scotch Greens. –Todd (Split Seven)

SCRAWL, LE: *Too Short to Ignore: CD*

Grindcore can get monotonous at times. Like any genre, someone comes along and makes things interesting. Imagine eating a handful of gummy bears, down it with a large cup of coffee, followed with two chili dogs, a cobb salad, popcorn and warm beer. Go to any carnival or amusement park and go on any ride that spins. When you go into full g-force spins, projectile vomit toward the center of the ride and for a split second what appears in the middle is physically what this German band plays musically. To give music references, I would say, take your typical grindcore with cookie monster vocals, add some acid jazz, some ska and love for R&B and it still doesn't describe it. Most grindcore has an evil, angry tone to the music. This band reverses the formula to make the music sound almost happy. I could picture the band with their keyboard player and horn section on stage smiling while playing their material. Surreal. Another reference Matt Average gave me about this band was "along the lines of No Less or Plutocracy, but darker." This is supposed to be a complete discography of released, demo and live tracks from 1990 - 1999. Sixty-six tracks in total. I first heard of this band from my brother. The band was a on comp titled *Rotten Fake!* with Agathocles and Seven Minutes of Nausea. The tracks were cover songs of De La Soul, The Exploited, Terrorizer, Chic and the *Mission Impossible* theme song. I was hooked but never ran across any of their releases. I noticed my friend's distro had the discography in stock, so, I snapped it right up. I can't wait for more to come my way! Truly twisted! –Donofthead (Life is Abuse)

SCRAWL, LE: *Too Short to Ignore: CD*

Holy Christ-crankin muttonchops, if this ain't the fucked-upedest record I've heard in years, if not ever! I'm gonna call them a grind band, as that's the common element, but EVERY SINGLE SONG (there are sixty-six) jumps from grind to one or more other things and back again like a flea on a meth binge: lounge jazz, ska, other kinds of jazz I don't know the name of, disco (they cover "Good Times"), flute solos, you name it. I wanna say it's like the Residents doing Napalm Death, but that seriously barely approaches the amazingly curdled reality of these German fruitcakes. I don't even know if I like the fucking thing; every time I put it on, my jaw drops open and stays that way until it goes off. Jeez. –Cuss Baxter (RSR/Life Is Abuse)

SHOCKER, THE: *Up Your Ass Tray: CD*

Upon seeing that The Shocker is the latest outfit former L7-er Jennifer Finch has up and rolling, I was more than interested to see what she has going on here, being

that I've always been quite a big fan of the mighty L7. The Shocker pretty much stick to the formula Jennifer rocked out of the speakers back in her L7 days, and there are some pretty bad-ass cuts here, my faves being "Your Problem Now" and "Break in Two." There's a cover here of Kim Carnes' "Angel of the Morning" that will make even your hippy-dippy Mom break out in fist-pumping glee. And while she's busy rocking, you can frisbee all her Fleetwood Mac and Eagles vinyl out the window, replacing it with more suitable LPs such as this one – if you love yer Mom, you'll do it. Good release here and I'm looking forward to seeing it roar live. –Designated Dale

(Oglio; <www.shockersite.com>)

SHOTWELL / GIANT BAGS OF WEED: Split 7"

Shotwell: Imagine if Fifteen's music didn't suck almost as bad as the lyrics, that it was smart, duct tape and crossed-fingers Crimpshrine-glorifying punk with a few more pop elements. Then, you'd get Shotwell. The music smells of rotting sneakers and shirts that have mildewed and fused to the body from weeks of unwiped sweat. That's a compliment. GBOW: Before Jawbreaker as we know it gelled, they released a demo under the name Rise and Blake didn't sing lead. (A guy named John Liu did.) This reminds me of that demo tape, while mixing in some Husker Du guitar wash. It's swelling, creative punk that's sensitive and subtly complex, but isn't being a pussy about it. For two bucks, you could do a lot worse. –Todd (Half-Day, \$2)

SIDECAR: *You're Killing Me: CD*

I bet their friends were bummed when they didn't get thanked. Then they heard the album. Then they were stoked, bra! This blows. Generic tattoo-rock. Straight from my trash to the Warped Tour. –Megan (Three Mileage)

SLAUGHTER AND THE DOGS: *A Dog Day Afternoon: CD*

Sometimes some things come across better in a live forum than they do in the studio. Case in point, the last Slaughter and the Dogs studio album. I loathed it, all its overblown sound and '80s glam metal trappings besmirching the name of a band I once respected. And then Todd left this in my mailbox. This is a surprisingly good live album from these veterans, sporting good sound and spirited performances from all involved. Even the tracks off that last album are, at the very least, tolerable here, and the versions of "I'm Mad," "Where have all the Bootboys Gone," and especially the cover of "Who Are the Mystery Girls?" are top-notch. There may still be some life left in the old dog after all, although it might be a good idea to keep it out of the sterile confines of the studio and let it snarl instead in the clubs, where it belongs. –Jimmy Alvarado (TKO)

SLEAZIES, THE: *Gonna Operate on Myself: 7"*

Fun, demented, sniffing glue and popping bubblegum punk rock that's not too heavy, knows when to stop, and has that nice bounce-along quality of early Adverts and the Briefs. The following sums it up quickly: "When I'm peeing, it affects my aim/ Got air pockets in my brain." Not rocket science, but remember,

stuff like this is on a knife's edge and can easily fall into purely fucking dumb (see the last couple of Queens albums. "My cunt's a cunt." Please). As it stands, The Sleazies are merely mildly retarded in all the right ways. –Todd (Rapid Pulse)

SLUM CITY: *Hot Beef Injection: CDEP*

These girls (and one guy) play some fast, snotty, sloppy punk that is infectious as hell. Their sound reminds me of the Lunachicks. Don't be turned off by the gross cover of some ugly guy biting into a huge hot dog loaded with every condiment imaginable. That was gross enough to toss this aside. But one look inside and you will notice that the three girls in the band not only sound great, they are hot! With my interest now peaked, I went to their website (www.slumcitytx.com) to find pics of Suzy Slum (guitar, vocals) playing a show in a spaghetti strap bustier thingy with her boobs spilling out the top of it. I'm in love. –Toby (SSR)

SMUT PEDDLERS: *Ten Inch: 10"*

Has it been almost ten years? The Smut Peddlers have been firing on all cylinders lately – gigging constantly, recording on a regular schedule, and it shows why they're emerging as one of the best, most reliable OC punk bands in existence. (Smogtown, RIP.) Gish Stiffness's bass is the understated foundation, Julia's drumming is both more frantic, inventive, and precise, and Sean's guitar is right on par with Roger Ramjet's (whom he replaced). Couple this with their last full-length, *Ism*, John Ransom, lyricist and singer, has emerged with a twisted, yet clear voice as the underbelly of Orange County. He has an insatiable fascination with pharmaceuticals that are prescribed to overcome addiction and their effects on the body; specific parts to Harley Davidsons; big skateparks with bowls as the alms that will cure most of society's ills; and expresses an understandable beef with "Escalade drivers wanting reparations." This is a spot-on extension to their already considerable catalog, and it's near the top. –Todd (Dead Beat)

SONS OF HERCULES, THE: *Right Now: CD*

Another serving of Texas bar-punk (kinda like a less-memorable Lazy Cowgirls, but more Flaming Groovie-ish) from this seemingly immortal outfit, fronted by a guy appropriately fossilish enough that I'd like to think his worldview has "punk" starting with Mouse & The Traps or the Thirteenth Floor Elevators, and continuing unabated in a straight line thru the Hates and Dicks and Mullens and whoever the fuck else – ongoing and eternally continuous, with no weird detours or asterisked subgenres – and power to him. I don't think this one's as good as *Hits for the Misses* – their best, although to be honest I've never heard anything truly spectacular by them – but I always kinda thought this band's appeal was designed to be appreciated best live in a smoky barroom drinking cold longnecks of Pabst™ (or inferior local equivalent) on a hot summer night anyway. Rock on. BEST SONG: "Digging Your Own Grave" BEST SONG TITLE: "Snake People" (in a related matter, I have decided that "proximity to rattlesnakes" is why when non-Texans put percussion devices such as maracas and shakers in a song, it comes off as fey and effete production

frillery, but when Texans do it, it sounds mean and ass-kicky-like) FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Singer is wearing paisley shirt. Please make a note of it. –Rev. Nørb (Suprema)

SOVIETTES, THE: *Self-titled: CD*

I've been waiting for this album for a long time, I just didn't know it would be The Soviettes who would do it. Sean and I have talked at length how we couldn't think of a lady-fronted band beyond the Avengers who, when they waxed political, didn't just resort to screaming. We stretched our brains. Name a female-singing band that fucking rocked it beyond the Avengers, who, when they turned to serious topics – questions of rape, abandonment, relationship deterioration, of media monopolies – still made it sound fun without cheapening the subject matter? Enter The Soviettes. Fourteen songs that vary greatly from one another, all fit together, and seem so grounded. I have to sit and think it's a revolution. In no small way, pop punk has never done this. I'd go as far to say as they match the bounce and impossible-not-to-smile-along quality of the Go Go's to the lightning bolt from the fingertips attack of Bikini Kill. They even tackle the sticky questions of gender and sexuality in a way that seems all-inclusive, and most importantly, human, so guys can sing along without fear of getting their peckers chopped at. Add to that, they've got undeniable charm, chops, and a CD that gets played on instant repeat. Awesome, in the original sense of the word. –Todd (Adeline)

STRUNG UP: Self-titled: 7"

Another hardcore band here with a sound that brings back the sounds of early/mid-'80s American hardcore. This would fit nicely sandwiched between the first *Condemned to Death* EP and *Bad Posture's* twelve-incher. –Jimmy Alvarado (Kangaroo)

SWEET J.A.P.: *Virgin Vibe: LP*

An assault, in the best possible sense. I had a chance to see these guys live in Minneapolis and I was amazed that they could play so fast, so frenetic, and actually play their songs note-for-note. That impressed me much more than any prodigy playing the violin or piano, because, really, could those dandies play so well with beer being thrown at them? Could they do it surrounded by a churning crowd? No. Of course not. Sweet J.A.P. (three of them a Japanese, thus the play on words) take the banner placed in America's ass by Teenegenerate and kept there by Registrators. In other words, they play garage rock that is too fast and chaotic for the garage purists, and punk rock that's too tightly played for the punk purists, but perfect for those of us who like to flat-out rock out without worrying about what holes to fill. I had a hypothesis that if a Japanese band was to continuously kick our asses at our own game, they'd have to cross an ocean before shaming us. (Figuring fresh sushi, sleeping on mats, and advances in technology would always give them the edge.) Nope, these guys have resided in Minnesota long enough for American culture to make them slow, cheese-fat, and complacent. Twelve songs. They go off like a dozen bottle rockets lit in your back pocket. If you can't wiggle or scream

along when they sizzle to life, you've either got iron underwear or no molecules in your brain with an appreciation for fast music. Spectacular. –Todd (Big Neck)

TEARS, THE: *She Ain't Right b/w Death in Texas & Don't Care About Nothing: 7*

The first promo blurb i saw for this record described the band's sound as being something to the effect of "if the Muffs were on Crypt Records," which, having seen the band live, i thought might've been a bit of wishful thinking on the parts of all parties concerned. However, after further viewing and listening, i have come to the conclusion that the vocals are, in fact, sufficiently Muffisian enough, and the music, in fact, sufficiently Cryptish enough to at least warrant the comparison – and i'll go you one better if you've got the nerve: i think the pegged-out destructo-bash production (or lack thereof), at least on the a-side, brings to mind salient whiffs of the first coupla Guitar Wolf albums (potentially with a half-carafe of "Steppin' Stone" on the side!), so there. My main bone of contention with the record – which is, invariably, the same bone of contention i have with multiple records each issue – is that bands have GOT to make better assessments of how much song they have to work with, how long the song should last for optimum results, and then take steps to NOT run the song any longer than that. I mean, for fuck's sake, in "Death in Texas," they go "death in Texas, death in Texas!" about twenty fucking trillion thousand times before the song is over; by about the third round of "death in Texas, death in Texas'es, i'm about ready to heave a shoe at the fucking stereo. YES. I GET IT. "DEATH IN TEXAS, DEATH IN TEXAS." RIGHT. GOT IT. CAN I PLEASE GO NOW??? I mean, i actually start feeling legitimate dread when i hear them going into the "death in Texas, death in Texas" parts, because i know i'm gonna hafta sit thru "Death in Texas, death in Texas! Death in Texas, death in Texas! Death in Texas, death in Texas!" for the umpteenth lifetime (it's sorta like why i hate when bands do that song "I'm A Man" – who the fuck wants to sit thru some slowpoke spelling out "M-A-N?" I mean, I CAN SPELL FUCKING "MAN," OKAY???). I was sick of the song before it even finished. And, the thing of it is, all you gotta do to bypass this particular Cherry Pitfall™ are simple little things like making the first chorus half the length of the second chorus, which also adds tension to the first chorus, and drama to the second (somehow). Whatever. Nice simultaneous double lead guitar throughout, there must be a lot more pot around than when i was a young'un. BEST SONG: "She Ain't Right" BEST SONG TITLE: I think i used to like "Death In Texas"... the first twelve million billion times i heard it. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Rhymes with "bears," not with "beers." –Rev. Nørb (Bancroft)

TED LEO/PHARMACISTS: *Hearts of Oak: CD*

Even though I bought this on the day it came out, I'm eternally grateful to Todd for sending it, both because it was the first CD I'd received that I could actually look forward to hearing and because it provided a second copy of this disc so that I could leave one copy in my player at home and another in my player at work. And yes, it really is that good. In fact, it's better than that. It's better than my explanation of how good it is and better than your idea of what a great album is. Ted Leo has created a masterful work which recalls his angular, jangly, edgy mod-pop with Chisel and proceeds further into the uncharted territories that 2001's *The Tyranny of Distance* began exploring (*Rx/Pharmacists*, while an interesting album in its own right, has little to do with this discussion). *Hearts of Oak* is filled with unexpected surprises – the ridiculously funky basslines on the title track, the literary sensibilities which infuse every line, the joyful rock of "2nd Ave, 11AM," the referential and reverent Two Tone tribute contained in "Where Have All the Rude Boys Gone?" and the constant, persistent dance beats. "Bridges, Squares" gallops along like a giddy, playful horse trying to buck not only its rider but the entire system to boot; a triumphant, questioning pop song which poses only questions and ciphers without offering answers or solutions. As a whole, this album seems to examine what happens when political idealism and the best intentions run headlong into muddy realities. It simultaneously seems to acknowledge both the futility of and need for these convictions; to reconstruct its ideological structures as it deconstructs its philosophical foundation to examine the component parts. And what all this jibber jabber boils down to is that *Hearts of Oak* is so good that it is the early front-runner to top my list of the best records of 2003 and has been for over two months now. It will take an album of epic proportions and astounding brilliance to unseat it from its current position. –Puckett (Lookout!)

TESTORS: *Complete Recordings 1976-1979: 2XCD*

The Testors were a New York City punk rock band when it meant a lot to be one. They were contemporaries of great bands like the Ramones, Richard Hell and the Voidoids, and the Heartbreakers, and Sonny Vincent was the guitarist and vocalist. They had that late seventies New York sound with a lot of rock'n'roll and a lot of skinny-city-kid attitude, and they left the overall impression that they were on heavy drugs (though I don't know if they really were). It fits right in with early stuff by The Cramps or stuff from the Dead Boys' *Young Loud and Snotty*. As the name would imply, these two CDs have every song that the Testors recorded, both in the studio and live. It's pretty fucking awesome. –Sean (Swami)

THIS MOMENT IN BLACK HISTORY: *The Cleveland Finger: EP*

Black by popular demand, indeed. Yellin', stompin', resurrectin' scronk that Jon Spencer would sell his soul and hot wife for. Dirty, greasy-fingered cat call vocals. Mystery liquid-slippery guitars. Appalachian venom snakes of salvational bass. Bricks of firecrackers in the drums. Includes current and ex members of Neon King Kong, The Chargers Street Gang, and the Bassholes, so you know it's dick in live socket, herky jerky smasho fun punk. James Brown's illegitimate kids hooked to Pabst IVs who developed great reflexes for ducking dear old dad's gun shots? It's real fun to make believe it so. –Todd (Exit Stencil)

THREATS: *Demos and Rarities: CD*

Primal Scottish punk ranting recorded 1979-82 by a band that has apparently decided to give it another go. It's absolutely mind-boggling that these guys aren't as well known as the Exploited, Subhumans and all them other '80s UK punk bands, 'cause it's painfully obvious they had the chops to be huge back then. No small amount of gratitude is due to Dr. Strange for making these tunes available again. –Jimmy Alvarado (Dr. Strange)

THROW RAG: *Desert Shores: CD*

"Stellar." Look up that word in a dictionary and you'll see a pencil drawing of this band right next to it. Over the years, Throw Rag have gone on to win over the most dirt-ridden of hearts by kicking it out onstage as well as digging themselves into the brains of the most jaded music fuck with what they've procreated in the studio, turning these listeners into full-blown r'n'r junkies. Originally recorded and slated to be released as *2nd Place* the band went back and re-recorded the whole shebang, and *Desert Shores* is what they finally ended up taking to the pressing plant. Being a true believer of the 'Rag, I can't help but wonder if the original version of this album would've knocked more dicks in the dirt, 'cause I've heard the live versions of most of this release, and the live versions absolutely smoke the versions here. And let me add that that's saying a whole hell of a lot, as the songs on this record make me flop around like a paraplegic chicken with fucking epilepsy every time I put this disc on. With songs like "Hollywood" (LOVE this fucking song!), "Bag of Glue," "Hang Up," "Reno," and "Demons in a Row," this is Throw Rag doing what they've consistently done time and time again – writing and recording great songs, plain and simple. Sounds easy, don't it? Sure it does. If it's so damned easy, everyone can do it, right? Wrong. There's only one Throw Rag. Anyone reading this should also seek out their 1st full-length, *Tee-Tot*, if you already haven't. Crucial listening, to say the least. But if you want to see one of the best damn things making music and doing their thang live, go see the

almighty Throw Rag. You'll be converted quicker than Sean of The Skulls can say, "Carnitas burrito – and HURRY THE FUCK UP!" at Alberto's. Trust me. –Designated Dale (BYO)

TIMVERSION, THE: Floribaska: 10"

First rule: any kind of music can be done well, even if it usually isn't. I'm sure, somewhere in this world, there's a polka band that fucking rips. So I try not to immediately dismiss any kind of genre crossovers. I'm not a fan of acoustic music and I'm not a fan of country music, but some musicians have made me a believer. Shit, a few decades ago, country music was amazing. Listen to Hank Williams, Sr. Listen to Jimmy Rodgers. Listen to Johnny Cash. If you want to get up-to-date, listen to Slim Cessna. And if you think a band can't fuse country into punk, listen to This Bike Is a Pipe Bomb. Check out Against Me's seven inches. Anything can be done well. So, when I gave this new Timversion 10" its first spin, I was surprised to hear that it's mostly acoustic and countrified as all get out. Which is okay. On their full length and on their split with Super Chinchilla Rescue Mission, The Timversion sneak in countrified tunes. So I gave this a listen, and there's a lot going on here. It's easy to hear the Replacements influence. It's also easy to hear some Uncle Tupelo in here (and, I can't believe I'm saying this in writing, but early Uncle Tupelo was pretty good. Every time I go to sell back my Uncle Tupelo album, I end up giving it one last listen and deciding to keep it). Mostly, though, this is a lot of The Timversion, just stripped down. The songs are kinda sad and redeeming. The first four listens are a race to learn the words so I can sing along. And, slow or not, it's never boring. They claim to have been drunk when they recorded this, but the musicianship is spot on. Even the harmonica is cool. Hell, there's even a drinking song for Davey (Tiltwheel) Quinn called, appropriately enough, "Drinkin' Song for Davey Quinn." This isn't a match for The Timversion's full length, *Creating Forces that Don't Exist*, or for their split with the Chinchillas, but then again, I don't hear too many records at all that are a match for those two. And, to be honest, I've listened to this album every day since I got it. On some days, I break down and listen to it two or three times. –Sean (Soooo Intense)

TOKYOSEXDESTRUCTION: Le Red Soul Comunnitte: CD

Yet another band invokes the holy name MC5 and flirts with pseudo-radical politics. This one's from Spain. Thankfully, they rock like mad muthafuckas. GodDAMN, this is one monster of a platter. This bad boy is gonna get cranked to eleven with a considerable amount of frequency. –Jimmy Alvarado (Dim Mak)

TOYS THAT KILL: Control the Sun: CD

Anyone who knows me knows I love TTK. I've seen them damn near a hundred times. I really liked the new stuff that they'd been slowly adding to their set lists, which is why my initial thoughts on *Control* surprised me. I definitely thought it was decent, but not as good as *The Citizen Abortion*. It didn't have the immediate hooks and is almost all mid-tempo. Upon more listens, it finally hit me. I was hooked. The mid-tempo-ness makes me think of Replacements and Husker Du,

where the music may be slower, but it sure as hell still rocks out. By about the tenth listen, I began thinking that not only was this as good as *Citizen*, but I full-heartedly think that it surpasses it (which is tough since *The Citizen Abortion* hasn't left the closest stack to the stereo since its release). I think it's even more addictive. I find myself singing part of a song (usually "Just One Jump" or "The World United Against Breeding") several times throughout the day. Everything sounds so big and full and intentional. Every note, every vocal, every quirk seems to have a specific purpose and need. Not in an epic way – this ain't no fuckin' opera. It just fits so perfectly together. Topics range from political to personal to procreation to some guy named Jed who wanted a song about himself, poor bastard. More than highly recommended with the advice to give it the chance of a few listens to win you over. Believe me, it will. –Megan (Recess)

TRAGEDY: Vengeance: LP

If you are looking for the future of DIY hardcore. If you want to hear a band that has re-set the standard. If you wondered how a band could be ultra-heavy, melodic, and quick without compromising any element. If you think it's all been done before, and better. If you want to hear anger expressed without a filter. If you want to hear music that is simultaneously as ugly and beautiful as the culture in which we live. If you ever wondered what opera would sound like if it was made for people in the gutter or kicked to the curb. If you have ever thought that the entire world was a concentration camp, surrounded by barbed wire. This is the album, the soundtrack. It's utterly amazing. It's sounds so big, all-encompassing, like you're entering their world. –Todd (Tragedy)

TURBONEGRO: Scandinavian Leather: CD

God damn, this is hard. I put these guys on the cover. I waited five years to do an interview with them. They've been a top favorite of mine going on eight years, right after *Ass Cobra* pinned my ears back. When *Apocalypse Dudes* first came out, I didn't like it. Turbonegro deals in dramatic shifts that only become obvious after a little bit of perspective. Three months after first getting it, *Apocalypse Dudes* became attached to the record player for a year straight, and, to this day, is permanently on the high rotation shelf. Put it this way, as you many give faith to sports, religion, or youth crews for guidance, I have faith in Turbonegro to be the band that cracks my ear open. Who knew that they'd be my gateway to no-suck arena rock that I'd dismissed as purely cock posturing? They did. And so when I first heard *Scandinavian Leather*, I listened without judgement because when they played these songs live, they pretty much ruled. When I popped in the CD, I was ready for a continuation of the trajectory away from Negative Approach towards The Sweet. Yet, there were things I associate with the band that I full-heartedly expected. Deathpunk. The genre they invented. Granted, I'm talking from only thirty spins, but I'm sort of disappointed. There seems to be a shaving off of some of the snarl, of the danger, of the over-the-top erections and ripped anuses. In those emptied places are David Bowie-like flourishes that are more pretty and radio-friendly

than aggressive or stupefyingly great. (The "Intro: The Blizzard of Flames" sounds like something Peter Gabriel wrote.) I find myself singing along less. But, I'm not giving up. Turbonegro has this microscopic spore-like quality. All they need is one vulnerable cell to infect, then it's all over. My fingers are still crossed that my ears get split wide open once again. –Todd (Epitaph)

TURN PALE: Kill the Lights: CD

Bauhaus team up with Sex Gang Children and decide to immerse themselves in *Flowers of Romance*-era PIL. Don't know if this is gonna go over well with today's Anne Rice readin', black dress wearin', Marilyn Manson and bad gloomy techno lovin' group of gloomy Gusses, but this is easily the best death rock-inspired disc I've come across in one hell of a long time. Compared to some of the crap that has claimed the goth tag in recent decades, this is pretty goddamned original sounding. –Jimmy Alvarado (What Else)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: High Energy High Voltage: CD

Pretty accurate title for this comp, 'cause what you get for your buck is some brain-melting tuneage from Allergic to Whores, Uncurbed, Flag of Democracy, Krigshot, Assuck, Y, Nine Shocks Terror, Hellnation, Romantic Gorilla, Gaia and a truckload of others. While the common ground covered here is hardcore, there is enough diversity in approach and style to keep the proceedings from getting boring. This is gonna garner lotsa airplay in this house. –Jimmy Alvarado (Sound Pollution)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: The International Language of Love: CD

Wow, this music is like a cross between (get this) THE BEACH BOYS and THE RAMONES! Holy shit! Who would've thought that you could mix those two polar opposites, huh? Certainly not the Ramones, that's for sure. Fuck no, the Ramones were punk as fuck and they only listened to punk fucking rock bands like Crass and the Exploited, not shitty pop music crap like the Beach Boys! The Ramones were complete visionaries who invented punk rock without any outside influence or inspiration whatsoever and any real punk knows that! <deep, calming breath> Man, I can't even discuss this shit anymore. Pop punk should be obliterated. –Not Josh (Whoa Oh)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: L.A. Shakedown 2003 Compilation: 2xCD

I was always a big fan of attending the Las Vegas Shakedown, even though every other time i went i had one of the worst experiences of my life (for completely non-music-related reasons), but i (apparently sagely) passed on attending the relocated Shakedown this year, even though, by the math, i was due for nothing but metaphorical blue skies and hopefully-not-so-metaphorical orgiastic revelry this time. Apart from the fact that, as i understand it, one could have more fun playing this compilation at home whilst watching PBS with the sound down and ramming lard up one's own ass than one would have had had one actually attended the event, this comp serves as a fairly functional sampler (and/or souvenir of what you might have seen if they would've let you

in), and includes both a surprisingly cool Nashville Pussy track and a mirth-makingly woeful Supersuckers song. Also, were i local muttonchop heartthrobs the Mystery Girls, i would be prostrating myself before and/or greasing the palms of the almighty Comp Gods, because some kind soul put their track on right before the Nebula song, and, obviously, that's where i or anyone else with half a grain of musical taste take it off in disgust. BEST SONG: Nashville Pussy, "Hitchhike Down to Cincinnati" BEST SONG TITLE: Nekkromantics, "Gargoyles Over Copenhagen" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: There are no fantastic amazing trivia facts to speak of, as this whole extended family of bands has now hit and surpassed the same Permanent Glut Threshold that pop-punk did about five or six years ago, and anything fantastic or amazing that might occur can just be written off as statistical aberration, the exception that proves the rule, or, in the case of the Nashville Pussy song, rather overdue. –Rev. Nørb (Acetate)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Let's Get Killed: LP

I'm assuming from the title and the kinds of bands compiled here that this is a modern attempt to capture the feel of a *Killed by Death* compilation, and for the most part they succeed. While all of the bands here easily fall under the punk banner, there's some diversity in sound and the bands are in top form. Good sampler of the some "traditional" sounding bands that don't pander to the stereotypical "77 sound." Featured are Kill the Hippies, Radar Secret Service, Sweaty Weapons, CD Truth, Nowhere Squares and more. –Jimmy Alvarado (Cockpunch)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Midwest Rules - No Coast Punk Rock: CD

Working man punk rock from the Heartland that covers several different subgenres all sharing a cornfed no-bullshit approach. Whip yourself up a big tater tot hotdish, break open a case of cold PBRs, throw in a video of the Crusher versus Bruiser Brody and crank up the likes of Dougfight, the Brasstacks, the Bump N Uglies, the Inmates, the Murder City Wrecks and the Gordonsolie Motherfuckers and get a taste of the Good Life here in the Midwest. –Aphid Peewit (Haunted Town)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Nardcore: CD

The thief, Doug Moody, resurfaces, goes back into his vaults and is making another go at profiting from the punk scene once again. Doug Moody was the label owner of Mystic Records who actually introduced and released a lot of punk during the '80s. He was one greasy motherfucker. I don't think he paid anyone. I know I never received a penny for three compilation appearances. I only received one copy of each record my band was on. He practically would put out any band that would give him demos or have them record in his shitty studio. My theory is he wanted the volume to have constant income coming in. He created other labels under the banner and even asked me once if I would be interested in starting a label with him. Well, a backlash occurs when too much product is on the shelves. People eventually don't buy it. During the late '80s and early '90s, you couldn't give away his stuff. But a new generation of punks

cycled in, collecting punk records began to go out of control and the records eventually disappeared. Ebay came to fruition, and prices went through the roof. Now there is a market again for Mystic releases. Doug Moody must have been monitoring Ebay to see what his releases are going for these days. Now all of a sudden, reissues have been appearing quietly on store shelves around the country. I was having a discussion with one of my friends in Canada about the subject and we were talking about the possibility of *Nardcore* being reissued since it's one of the releases I never purchased or received. The very next day, we both receive an email update from a mailorder/distro that we both purchase from. The *Nardcore* comp is available on CD! What a weird coincidence. I figure, fuck it!, I need to get a copy. I hate to give that old fuck my money. But I have to look at the bigger picture. If I buy it from my local record store, Headline Records, that store profits and stays in business. Even though the label is not supporting the scene, the store is. If you just happened to not know, *Nardcore* = Oxnard Hardcore. Oxnard is a city in Ventura County, located in Southern California. I pop the plastic disc into the player and the first song by Ill Repute becomes familiar. I don't think I listened to the original comp in fifteen years. Three tracks that sound better to me now than back then. Scared Straight, which became Ten Foot Pole and later the singer started Pulley, has two tracks which sound better to me than their 7" on the same label. The R.K.L. tracks are by far the best on the whole comp. The two tracks by Aggression are good, but are not recorded as well as songs on the *Don't be Mistaken* LP and the *Someone Got Their Head Kicked In* comp. The two tracks by Stalag 13 do not appear on the Dr. Strange reissue of *In Control*. The comp is rounded out with tracks by Rat Pack, Habeas Corpus, False Confessions (who the singer and I used to get mistaken for each other), The Rotters, Dr. Know and A.F.U. A release that is a great document of the era, even though a ripoff is putting it back out again. —Donofthedeat

(Doug Moody Productions)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Reason to Believe Benefit Comp: CD*

This is a comp put together by the folks at *Reason to Believe* magazine. In case you are not familiar, they are a hardcore mag out of the UK. The mag is free. In order to help keep it that way, they made this comp. All the proceeds will go to keeping the mag free. Now onto the comp. What can I say but it was really good. It features bands such as Brezhnev, Coche Bomba, Crispus Attacks, Dumbstruck, Endstand, E-150, HHH, Imbalance, Manifesto Jukebox, NNY, Seem Red, Sin Dios, Stand and Unkind. All the bands are from Europe except Crispus Attacks, who are from the USA. As you can tell from the band list, there are better known bands on this comp along with some unknowns as well. (At least unknown to this Yank.) The great thing about this comp is that there was not a dud on it. All the bands were really good. So definitely get this comp. It's a great comp and helps a great magazine to keep publishing. —Mike Beer (Flat Earth)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Senza Tregua: LP*

All bow down and give Chris BCT his props. Along with *MRR's Welcome to*

1984 and Pushead's *Cleanse the Bacteria* comps, his *Bad Compilation* (later *Borderless Countries*) tape compilations were responsible for making international hardcore supergroups like Mob 47, Raw Power, Kaaos and others friggin' household names. As far as I can recollect, he was putting his tapes out before *MRR* and Pushead jumped on the bandwagon. This disc here is a vinyl version of BCT tape #16, an all Italian Hardcore showcase featuring Wardogs, I Refuse It, Statto di Polizia, Putrid Fever, Traumatic, Juggernaut and the legendary Cheetah Chrome Motherfuckers. As can be expected, the sounds are wildly spastic, insanely varied and ridiculously crucial for anyone who takes their hardcore seriously. The sound has been cleaned up all nice and purty to facilitate even louder cranking of the stereo, and the CD version, which is slated for release later this year, is supposed to include the tracks that weren't able to fit on this slab of wax. Includes artwork by Winston "Jello Biafra is a friend of mine" Smith, a booklet with pics, lyrics and info, limited run of 1,000, and highly recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (Enterruption)

VERBAL ASSAULT:

The Masses and Learn: CD

The mid to late '80s hardcore scene was blessed for a time with a sudden glut of straight edge bands who were not only influenced by Minor Threat, they seemed to have plundered wholly from that legendary band's catalog of heretofore unknown, unheard compositions. Two of the biggest of these bands were Southern California's Uniform Choice and New Hampshire's Verbal Assault. The disc being discussed here is the latter's first two forays into the world of recording, *The Masses*, being a cassette recorded live on a radio station and the other their first official slab of wax. Hearing these tunes for the first time in more than a decade, the Minor Threat cloneisms are less painful to endure and one can now identify that they really did turn in some pretty solid tunes, even if ridiculously derivative. Nice trip down memory lane to a time when Ian still ruled the X-handed roost, one full year before all the kids developed a fondness for Youth of Today, began cloning them en masse and leaving their worldly possessions to Lord Krishna, and the singer of Uniform Choice started dropping acid and singing in stoner metal bands. —Jimmy Alvarado (Mendit, Inc.)

VIIMEINEN KOLONNA:

Aistien Juhlaa: CD

I get things the hard way sometimes. I got this from a trade buddy in Finland even though it was released here. So it gets made here in the States, travels all the way to Finland and returns back to the States to me. It's probably a good thing, since I might not have purchased it by myself. I'm sure my trade buddy is friends with this band since it seems the band is based in the same city, Helsinki. What do I hear? The intro track sounds like a crust, '80s metal riffage thing that I hope doesn't continue for the whole disc. I think it was just a scare tactic. The second track and after, they blaze through a fast paced hardcore beating that follows lyrically in style towards Discharge. Contents of lyrics? No idea. It's in Finnish and I'm not a citizen. But the music makes up for the lack of understanding. The production has that early '80s UK feel. It's raw, with enough bite to make you want to kick your own

teeth into a curb. Crust is a good description. The guitar buzzes in a raunchy way with its fast-paced almost metal tinges. The drums and bass keep pace but do not stray from the formula. Three notes, a lot of anger and it equals a recipe for an aggressive time. —Donofthedeat (Hardcore Holocaust)

WASTED: *Can't Wash off the Stains: CD-EP*

Wasted is the name of a band that plays in the background while I try to decide which version of "Wasted" is better. The Circle Jerks' version is faster so I declare them the winner, but by the time I come to that conclusion, this CD is (mercifully) over and I can't really remember what Wasted the band sounds like. But they use a stencil font on their artwork so I'll say Rancid-esque bar rock, but I think the singer sounded like Mike Ness with some kind of European accent. I'm not too fond of Rancid, bar rock, or European accents, so I'll pass. —Not Josh (Boss Tuneage)

WEDNESDAY NIGHT HEROES, THE:

Superiority Complex: CD

One of the biggest obstacles facing oi and street punk is you've got to contend with the rich, tight history of bands that came before. Cocksparrer, Blitz, Abrasive Wheels, The Partisans, 999, Angelic Upstarts, Peter and the Test Tube Babies, Stiff Little Fingers and a handful of powerhouses left, literally, little room for improvement. But, there are ways to break the pub rock hammerlock. You may disagree, but Rancid and the Dropkick Murphys did it in the beginning. The US Bombs continue to do it. How? Understand the past, incorporate it like

endless pints of beer into the bloodstream, then start a new riot to call your own. And you know what? The Wednesday Night Heroes, like The Boils and The Beltones, pull it off. While reminiscent of other bands, I find that a lion's share of these songs don't have me reaching for other well-played albums with ring-wear on the jackets. More than holds its own. —Todd (Longshot)

WISEGUY:

Burning the Tracks: CD

Dirty rock'n'roll that makes me feel soiled and dragged through the '70s. —Donofthedeat (Stardumb)

ZODIAC MINDWARP AND THE LOVE REACTION:

I Am Rock: CD

Yeah, and I am the world's tallest bacon tree. —Cuss Baxter (Cosmosodomistic)

ZOMBIE SHARKS: *Return of the Captain Chainsaw: CD*

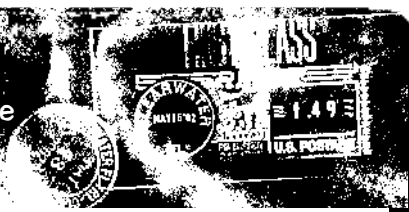
Russian hardcore/punk owing more than a nod to early-to-mid period Queers. Normally their influence would be tantamount to a scarlet letter, but there's something strangely endearing about them to make this fun to listen to. Maybe it's the demo quality of the recording, their stilted English, or even the conviction of their playing, but something is definitely catching, which is more than I can say for most bands these days. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.zombiesharks.narod.ru)

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to bands and labels that were reviewed either in this issue or posted on www.razorcake.com in the last two months.



- **77 RPM**, PO Box 9186, Glendale, CA 91226
- **Abominable**, 5637 Circle Drive, El Sobrante, CA 94803
- **Acetate**, 2020 Broadway, 2nd Floor, Santa Monica, CA 90404
- **Alone**, PO Box 3019, Oswego, NY 13126
- **Alternative Tentacles**, PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092
- **Amp**, 4348 Fairview Road, Columbia, PA 17512
- **Asian Man**, PO Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030
- **Bacchus Archives**, PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507
- **Bad Taste**, Box 1243, 221 05 Lund, Sweden
- **Bancroft**, 816 Bancroft Street, Port Huron, MI 48060
- **Blue Skies Turn Black**, 214 Thornhill, D.D.O., QC, H9G1P7, Canada
- **Bomp**, PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510
- **Born To Die**, 2012 11th St. Pl., East Moline, IL 61244
- **Boss Tuneage**, PO Box 74, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2WB, UK
- **Break-Up!**, PO Box 15372, Columbus, OH 43215-0372
- **Broken Rekids**, PO Box 460402, SF, CA 94146
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- **BYO**, PO Box, 67609, LA, CA 90067
- **Captain Oi**, PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP10 8QA, England
- **Chainsawsafety**, PO Box 260318, Bellerose, NY 11426
- **Chicken Head**, 7438 Etiwanda, Reseda, CA 91335
- **Chumpire 154**, PO Box 27, Annville, PA 17003-0027
- **Cocaine Pinata**, 1910 S. Wilson, Tucson, AZ 85713
- **Cockpunch**, 614 1/2 N. Mantua St., Kent, OH 44240
- **Coptercrash**, PO Box 6095, Hudson, FL 34667
- **Cosmosodomistic**, 1228 W. 7th St., LA, CA 90017
- **C-Town**, c/o Torsten Hildebrand, Lessingstr. 12, 09130 Chemnitz, Germany
- **Dead Canary**, PO Box 10276, Columbus, OH 43201
- **Dead Teenager**, PO Box 470153, SF, CA 94147-0153
- **Deep Six**, PO Box 6911, Burbank, CA 91510
- **Deranged**, PO Box 543 Station P, Toronto, ON, Canada, DER-33
- **Dim Mak**, PO Box 348, LA, CA 90078
- **Dirtnap**, PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111
- **Dischord**, 3819 Beecher St. NW, Washington, DC 20007
- **Does Everyone Stare?**, PO Box 1006, Edison, NJ 08818
- **Dr. Strange**, PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 90701
- **Endwell**, 19 Stori Road, Newburgh, NY 12550
- **Enterruption**, PO Box 884626, SF, CA 94188-4626
- **Estrus**, PO Box 2115, Bellingham, WA, 98227
- **F.I.M.P.**, 610 Phillip Avenue, Akron, OH 44305
- **Failed Experiment**, 2869 N. Milwaukee Ave. 2nd Floor, Chicago, IL 60618
- **Fat**, PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119-3690
- **FFWP**, 1804 Spring Garden St., Greensboro, NC 27403
- **Firefly**, PO Box 30179, London, E17 5FE, England
- **Flat Earth**, 145-149 Cardigan RD., Leeds, LS6 1LJ, United Kingdom
- **Foodchain**, 8490 Sunset Blvd. Suite 504, W. Hollywood, CA 90069
- **Fork in Hand**, PO Box 230023, Boston, MA 02123
- **Fudge Sickill**, PO Box 7052, Villa Park, IL 60181
- **Gearhead**, PO Box 421219, SF, CA 94142
- **Get Hip**, PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317
- **Geykido Comet**, PO Box 3743, Laguna Hills, CA 92654
- **GMM**, PO Box 15234, Atlanta, GA 30333
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- **GSL**, PO Box 178262, San Diego, CA 92177
- **Half-Day**, PO Box 3381, Bloomington, IN 47402
- **Hardcore Holocaust**, PO Box 26742, Richmond, VA 23261
- **Haunted Town**, 1658 N. Milwaukee Ave. #169, Chicago, IL 60647
- **Hellcat**, 2796 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026
- **HHC**, PO Box 2461, Bakersfield, CA 93303
- **High School**, Berlageweg 12, 9731 LN Groningen, the Netherlands
- **Household Name**, PO Box 12286, London, SW9 6FE
- **Hungry Ghosts**, PO Box 620241, Middleton, WI 53562
- **In the Red**, PO Box 50777, LA, CA 90050
- **Insurgence**, 2 Bloor St. W. Suite 100-184, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3E2 Canada
- **International Crime**, PO Box 546, Boyes Hot Springs, CA 95416
- **Iodine**, 1085 Commonwealth Ave., PMB 318, Boston, MA 02215
- **Irresponsible**, 115 Avenue B, Woonsocket RI 02895
- **Johann's Face**, PO Box 479164, Chicago, IL 60647
- **Kangaroo**, Middenweg 13, 1098 AA, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- **KOB**, Via Cantarane, 63/C, I - 37129 Verona
- **Last Mission**, <www.lastmissionmusic.com>
- **Law of Inertia**, 61 E. 8th St. #125, NY, NY 10003
- **Life Is Abuse**, PO Box 20524, Oakland, CA 94620
- **Livewire**, PO Box 007, Mendham, NJ 07945
- **Lobster**, PO Box 1473, Santa Barbara, CA 93102
- **Longshot**, 726 Richards St., Vancouver, BC V6B 3A4, Canada
- **Lookout! Panic Button**, 3264 Adeline Street, Berkeley, CA 94703
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- **Loud & Clear**, PO Box 8216, Goleta, CA 93118
- **Low Down**, PO BOX 4502, Ann Arbor, MI 48106
- **Mad Butcher**, Kurze Geismarstr. 6, D-37073 Gottingen, Germany
- **Malt Soda**, PO Box 7611, Chandler, AZ 85246
- **Mendit Inc.**, PO Box 1096, NY, NY 10003
- **Minimalist**, 154 Walnut St. #2, Somerville, MA 02145
- **Moodswing**, c/o Charles P., 3172 East Ponce de Leon Avenue, Scottdale, GA 30079
- **Mortville**, PO Box 4263, Austin, TX 78765
- **Mother West**, 132 W. 26 th St., NY, NY 10001
- **Mute**, 2798 Sunset Blvd., LA, CA 90026
- **Myles of Destruction**, PO Box 42673, Philadelphia, PA 19101
- **Nitro**, 7071 Warner Ave, Suite F736, Huntington Beach, CA 92647
- **No Front Teeth**, PO Box 27070, London, N2 9ZP, United Kingdom
- **Obscurist Press**, PO Box 13077, Gainesville, FL 32604
- **Out of the Loop**, PO Box 222, Tuart Hill, W.A. 6939, Australia
- **Pop Riot**, PO Box 14985, Minneapolis, MN 55414
- **Radio Blast**, Hildegardst. 13, 44809 Bochum, Germany
- **Rapid Pulse**, PO Box 5075, Milford, CT 06460
- **Reality Clash**, PO Box 491, Dana Point, CA 92629
- **Recess**, PO Box 1666, San Pedro, CA 90733
- **Reptilian**, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231
- **Rip Off**, 581 Maple Avenue, San Bruno, CA 94066
- **Rodent Popsicle**, PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134
- **RSR**, c/o Sandro Gessner, Strasse des Friedens 45, 07819 Mittelpölnitz, Germany
- **Rubric**, 75 Leonard, NY, NY 10013
- **S.P.A.M.**, PO Box 21588, El Sobrante, CA 94820-1588
- **Salinas**, PO Box 20996, Ferndale, MI 48220
- **Sean Healy**, 7095 Hollywood Blvd, LA, CA 90023-8903
- **Sinister Label**, PO Box 1178, La Grange, IL 60526
- **Skeptics, The**, <www.theskeptics.com>
- **Slusaj Najglasnije**, Tescovec 27c, 10090 Zagreb, Croatia
- **Smog Veil**, 314 California Avenue, #207, Reno, NV 89509
- **Soooo Intense**, 507 E. Caracas St., Tampa, FL 33603
- **Soulforce**, M.L.P.-Aparta de Correos 18199, 28080 Madrid, Spain
- **Sound Pollution**, PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017
- **Sounds of Subterranea**, PO 103662, 34036 Kassel, Germany
- **Spider Bite**, PO Box 265, Portsmouth, NH 03801
- **Spontaneous Combustion**, 3943 Cumnor Rd., Downers Grove, IL 60515
- **S-S**, 1114 21st Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
- **Standing 69's**, 16919 Laverne Ave., Cleveland, OH 44135
- **Stardumb**, PO Box 21145, 3001 AC Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- **Stay Real**, c/o The Neus Subjex, PO Box 18051, Fairfield, OH 45018
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- **Sudden Death**, PO Box 43001, Burnaby, BC, V5G 3H0, Canada
- **Sumo Agnew**, 1031 E. Grant Rd., Tucson, AZ 85719
- **Super Secret Records Inc.**, PO Box 1585, Austin, TX 78767
- **Swami**, PO Box 620428, San Diego, CA 92162
- **Swindlebra**, Postgasse 12, 89312 Günzberg
- **Dead Kings, The**, PO Box 9680, Charlotte, NC 29299-9680
- **Three Mileage**, 381 Broadway, 4th fl #3, NY, NY 10013
- **Tiger Style**, 401 Broadway, 26th Floor, NY, NY 10013-3005
- **TKO**, 3126 W. Cary St. #303, Richmond, VA 23221
- **Voodoo Rhythm**, Jurastrasse 15, 3013 Bern, Switzerland
- **Week End**, <weekendrec@yahoo.fr>
- **What Else**, PO Box 1211, Columbus, IN 47202
- **Whoa Oh**, 52 McLoughlin Street, Glen Cove, NY 1542
- **Wrench**, BCM Box 4049, London WC1N 3XX



Send all zines for review to Razorcake, PO Box 42129, LA, CA 90042. Please include a contact address, the number of pages, the price, and whether or not you accept trades.



2500 LEFT HANDED PEOPLE DIE EACH YEAR USING RIGHT HANDED PRODUCTS, #2, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 28 pgs. Jesska & co. offer up some funny and articulate writing of my ideal sort for zines! It's a collection of stories that spin off into witty anecdotes and a series of tangents. The writing is smart and maintained my interest throughout. Contains some book and record reviews as well. This was my favorite thing for review this issue. —Joe Biel (Jesska Spontaneous 8218 S 77th E Ave #2080 Tulsa, OK 74133)

BLACK VELVET, #35, 8 1/2 x 11 3/4, glossy cover, 35 pgs. This one's a bit odd — from it's size to it's cover banner which reads: "Animal Friendly —Glam Punk Rock." I understand the animal-friendly part; editor Shari Black Velvet uses her column to voice her hope to see fox hunting banned — and banned soon. But should the words "glam, punk, rock" have bullets between them or is it all just one designation? Judging by the various reviews and interviews inside, I would guess the former. The musical tastes are all over the place; they tout everything from Alice Cooper to Papa Roach to Bon Jovi (egad) to a bunch of British bands I'll probably never hear. They even have an interview with ex-Skid Row chucklefuck Sebastian Bach — the guy who used to wear that "Aids Kills Fags Dead" shirt back in the '80s. In the interview we learn that he is now playing Jesus of Nazareth in the musical *Jesus Christ Superstar*. (Come to think of it, didn't J. Christ used to get a rise out of the disciples with his funny shirt that joked about leprosy?) The *Black Velvet* writers especially seem to cotton to corporate punk boy bands like Good Charlotte and Sum 41, which makes Sebastian Christ seem interesting by comparison. Lots of stuff here but not much for me. I admire the "diversified" approach but I personally can do without catching up on what '80s hair metalers or corporate bubblegummers are up to. —Aphid Peewit (336 Birchfield Road, Webheath Redditch, Worcs. B97 4NG England)

BOYFUNK, Vol 1, \$2, 8 1/2 x 11, photocopied, 22 pgs. This zine is a resource for queer boys serving in opposition to all of the queer press dished out by the mainstream. Gives a great perspective into the culture and challenges and criticizes the notion that queer boys need to behave like yuppies in order to feel comfortable or fit in. I felt like a lot of it was vague and alluding to something that never came. Many of the articles talked

about a mission statement and then the rest of the zine continued in that manner until it was over. Maybe future issues will contain more articles. —Joe Biel (PO Box 503 Chenango Bridge, NY 13745-0503)

CHICKENHED ZINE AND ROLL, #5, \$2, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 40 pgs. This is the way a personal zine should be done: people who know how to tell a story talk about the remotely unique things that happen to them. The stories are actually entertaining and hold my interest the whole time I'm reading them. There is also an epic "hell-ku" (written in 6-6-6 syllables as opposed to the 5-7-5 pattern of a haiku, get it?) about the first band that this guy was in, which is hilarious ("People liked us a lot/They offered opinions:/You say fuck a lot, Dude.""). This was the best zine I read all month. P.S. Kickass hand-drawn layouts are light years better than zillion-dollar cut-and-paste computer printouts. —Not Josh (C.Z.A.R., PO Box 330, Richmond, VA 23218)

CHORD EASY, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 12 pgs. From the looks of it, the Light Living Library puts out a bunch of how-to booklets, and this one is about choosing chords that sound good together. Since I don't know anything about playing music, except that I'm not good at it, I'm probably not the best person to review it. However, if want to learn how to play guitar, this might be pretty helpful, I just didn't understand any of it because I'm dumb. They should put out *A Guide to Giving Yourself a Tattoo Without Giving Yourself a Disease*, because I would definitely check that out. —Not Josh (Light Living Library, PO Box 190, Philomath, OR 97370)

DEATH WEASEL, #6, \$2, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 28 pgs. I've followed the Death Weasel for a couple of years now. In five issues, he's battled evil, boredom, and depression like the unmotivated superhero he is. He's been bested by women, dragged down by an alter ego, travelled to ethereal realms, and been on Paxil. And now, he's on his final adventure. The comic starts with Death Weasel and his sidekicks, Carnage Shrew and Spite Pigeon, drinking at a bar and lamenting the lack of evildoers to battle. At the same time, a band of rodent rogues are on their way to the Death Weasel's city. The comic develops on these two separate story lines as they seem to lead to an inevitable climax. Then, it fucking stops. No "to be continued..." Just a "I got sick of doing this

comic." And the Death Weasel retires. What a bummer. It's still very well drawn. It still has its amusing parts, and benjones is one of those rare comic artists who can actually write well. But the end was a big letdown. —Sean (benjones, PO Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706)

EIGHT DREAMS, #1, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 16 pgs. At the end of this comic, the artist/writer, benjones, explains that he likes middles. Forget the beginning and end of the story. Just stick with the middle. So that's what *Eight Dreams* is. It's a guy who goes to a show, gets a drink, watches a band, and goes home. While there's no tension, it is a very recognizable situation. At first, I read the comic and thought, is that it? I like beginnings and endings. I like the tension. Stories seem so much better when they have a point. But I can see what benjones is doing here. He's taking a page out of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* and saying, "Wait a second. Forget about the plot. Forget about who killed the king and how everyone's gonna die at the end and look at this moment. What can you gather about this right here?" It's an interesting approach. He doesn't exactly have the handle on the absurd that Tom Stoppard has, but benjones does show you something poignant in a quick moment, and he makes you think. For these reasons, *Eight Dreams* is a successful experimental comic. And benjones can draw like a motherfucker. Check out this or any of his comics.

—Sean (benjones, PO Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706)

EMERGE AND SEE UNITY, #1, \$2, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 94 pgs. Another "here's my life story" type of zine. This one wasn't really good or bad. It's just that, while I was reading it, I would think of something that I would rather have been doing and the story wasn't good enough to hold my attention. It's basically a really detailed account of the author's psychological problems, so if you think that that can hold your interest for ninety-four pages, I say go for it. —Not Josh (Dakota Phoenix, PO Box 3, Leola, PA 17540)

FLAGWAIVER, #1, \$2, 4 1/4 x 5 1/2, photocopied w/ color cover, 24 pgs. This is an amazing little comic about the jingoism that swept this country after Sept. 11, 2001. It follows the day in a life of a kid who walks outside to go about his daily business and is besieged by the hordes of new patriots and their handheld American flags. When the kid tries to question all of this patri-

otism, he's attacked for being a commie, and he's forced to confront his own beliefs. Thematically, you've probably seen this before, but artist Edna Lifenshurnz finds a fresh way to discuss these issues. The comic is beautifully drawn, and there aren't any words in it. Everything is understood through the drawings. If a character thinks, "Holy shit!," rather than writing out the words, Lifenshurnz draws a thought bubble, a pile of crap, and a halo over it. Most of the examples are more clever than that, and the story is easy to follow, but you really get lost in the drawings. It's a beautiful comic.

—Sean (Ben T. Steckler, PO Box 7273, York, PA 17404)

GET BENT, #10, \$4, 4 1/4 x 5 1/2, photocopied w/ color cover, 80 pgs. For the tenth issue of his comic, Ben Steckler has assembled five mini-comics. All of them are well-drawn; all of them have full color covers. They're small, but they look great. Each mini-comic tells a day-in-the-life story of a different character. One is a prison guard who wants to be a writer, one is an old lady whose house got toilet-papered, one is Ben himself dealing with turning forty, one is a strange naked man who hates Cupid, and one is a priest at the end of his rope. The stories are a little sad, and they all have a sense of wonder to them. They're very well-drawn, and, if you read them two or three times, they'll really get you thinking. I'm glad to see that Ben is still churning out these underground comics. He hasn't disappointed me yet.

—Sean (Ben T. Steckler, PO Box 7273, York, PA 17404)

I'M JOHNNY AND I DON'T GIVE A FUCK, #5, \$4, 4 1/4 x 5 1/2, photocopied, 88 pgs.

I picked this up after hearing Andy read a section about the ongoing war between himself and his roommates against their landlord. The strange thing to me was that this is a personal zine AND I like it — a lot. This is heavily based on the manner in which he presents both himself and his surroundings. Instead of a journal-like format — where the topics written about are usually too recent to have any real perspective or depth — *I'm Johnny* reads like a good friend shooting the shit on the porch with a couple of beers on a warm night. This issue covers a house that he lived in for nine years, the shenanigans that happen while there, the people who pass through, the landlord's neglect, and the bonds formed around it. You might think the price is steep, but A) it's gotta come from Canada, and B) it's more than worth it once you account for how many times

you'll read it and how many people it'll get passed on to. Well worth it, and he doesn't sell back issues, so get it while you can.

—Megan (Andy, PO Box 21533-1850 Commercial Dr, Vancouver, BC V5N 5T5 Canada)

IT'S ALL GRAVY, #2 & 3, \$2, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 30 pgs.

What?!? A zine done by people whose lives DON'T revolve around punk rock?!? Blasphemy! Just kidding. *It's All Gravy* has a lot of what some *Spin* magazine jerkoff would call "hip-hop flavor," from the graffiti-style handwriting to, um, the issue dedicated to 2Pac. This is kind of a good read if you're doing some low-altitude bombing (that's a euphemism, by the way), except for the way that every writer will throw a couple of Spanish words in every sentence. Issue three was quite possibly the first time in history that Chilly Willy, the cartoon penguin, has ever been mentioned in the same pages as vaginal discharge and a recipe for marijuana brownies. —Not Josh (Nickolai Garcia, c/o Libros Revolucion, 312 W. 8th St., Los Angeles, CA 90014)

JERSEY BEAT, #72, \$3, 8 1/2 x 11, newsprint, 122 pgs.

Yet another issue of this jam-packed zine, filled with interviews and articles about the New Jersey indie/punk scene! Although at times it seems a little too into the professional music industry, I don't know of any other zine that does as good a job covering one scene. There's also non-Jersey stuff, like an interview with ever-lovable Mike Watt. Plus tons of record reviews! All hail New Jersey, home of Bruce Springsteen and chemical plants! —Maddy (418 Gregory Ave., Weehawken, NJ 07086)

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL, #239, \$3, 8 1/2 x 11, newsprint, 180 pgs. We all know the score here. Lots of coverage of the international punk scene. Lots of punker-than-you attitude. Lots of metal. This, the April Fool's Day/ "Swimsuit" Issue, has interviews with Defiance, the Amazombies, the Negatives, and Nicki Sicki; and Chris Bickel of Guyana Punch Line wrote the best column ever. Worth three bucks, I'll say that much. —Not Josh (MRR, PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146)

MOON RUST, #4, two stamps, 4 1/4 x 5 1/2, photocopied, 30 pgs. This is a split zine done by the guy who does *Dunk and Piss* and another guy who really likes *Against Me!* So far, so good. Alex, the *Dunk and Piss* guy, tells a story about how he got mononucleosis by drinking water out of a soda can containing a cigarette butt that he found in the

garbage. It is really well written despite the fact that I wanted to slap him for being so dumb. Mike, the *Against Me!* fan, writes a bunch of short pieces that seem kind of like journal entries, and he comes across as an angst-ridden teenager, even though his writing is more melancholy than "I fuckin hate my parents and school and vegetables but I like smokin pot and fuckin shit up punk rock style yo." Really cool zine. The only thing that I didn't get was when Mike compared an *Against Me!* show to "the second coming of Jesus" because that would imply that there was a first coming of Jesus.

—Not Josh (Moon Rust, 11 Alger Dr., Rochester, NY 14624)

PEANUT BUTTER JOURNAL, #1, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 48 pgs.

This zine is a sloppy, fucked up mess and that's just what the editor wanted. You constantly have to rotate the pages to read the text, but it was mostly worth it. Highlights included writings on Bigfoot, shoplifting, graffiti photos, and living with rats. This zine provided great entertainment for half an hour providing no heavy revelations but still giving me some smiles.

—Joe Biel (673 4th St. San Pedro, CA 90731)

PUNK ROCK LOSER, #1, free, 8 1/2 x 11, photocopied, 28 pgs.

Jimmy Reject is a dedicated fan of punk rock and this is his musical history, some reflections on punk, and some articles that he tried to pitch to magazines as a writing career (with no success). Also includes an interview he did while playing drums in the Dimestore Halos. The layout could use some work (and could waste less paper) but the writing tells a compelling story about his passion music.

—Joe Biel (rejectone@aol.com)

RATED ROOKIE, vol. 2 issue 4, \$3, 8 1/2 x 11, glossy, 48 pgs.

This zine is a collection of really short stories or articles — all of which appears to be nonfiction, and most of which is pretty damn funny. There are stories about being a teenage panty sniffer, about being wrongfully arrested for prostitution at a Halloween party, about battling cockroaches and hitting rock bottom and drinking on a front porch and baking cricket cookies and hating Cave In. The stories in this magazine all take about seven minutes to read, which, coincidentally, is exactly how long most people spend taking a crap. No, there's no hard hitting journalism here, but I'm giving it the thumbs up.

—Sean (Rated Rookie, 562 Park Place, #3, Brooklyn, NY 11238)

ROCK'N'ROLL PURGATORY, #9, \$2, 8 ½ x 11, copied, 41 pgs. Man, when I lived in Wooster, Ohio, the best thing they had going was chocolate-chip bagels with raspberry cream cheese. Apparently things have changed. *Purgatory* represents a pretty wide berth of music, but the strongest focus is on rockabilly. Interviews with Reverend Horton Heat, Trip Daddys, Hellvis, 7 Shot Screammers, and the two heavier-hitters for me: Deke Dickerson and the Beltones. The interviews caught me off guard. Take the Hellvis one, it starts on a pretty bland note (how they formed, where they grew up, first concert, yawn, yawn, yawn), turn the page and I get all turned around. Questions like: "Does the alleged voice of God ever tell you things: for example, that evil resides in the souls of short people?" Whaah? It gets really funny. Several pages of live reviews, tons o' funny pictures, and fourteen pages of reviews to shake a stick at. —Megan (342 S. Walnut St., Wooster, OH 44691)

SAFETY PIN GIRL, #17, \$2, 5 ½ x 8 ½, photocopied, 61 pgs. Jessica offers up the intensely personal stories and reflections that have come to define "personal zines." This is one of the better zines in that genre, so if you're into this stuff, check this out for sure.

Stories about manic depression, destructive relationships, some short rants. Me, I feel like the person who slows down while passing a car accident when I read super personal stuff, so I stick to zines about dumb crap. Being dumb myself, it just makes sense. —Maddy (410 18th St., Racine, WI 53403)

SEA OF SEED, #3, no price listed, 5 ½ x 8 ½, photocopied, 52 pgs. Okay, humor me for a second. I like to sit on my couch and listen to records and eat burritos. I just summed up my current state of affairs in one sentence, while this guy takes up a whole fifty-two pages to do so. And get this: his life is even LESS interesting than mine. It seems like all he and his friends do is get really, really drunk and fuck up each others' lives, but not in a twisted, Charles Bukowski way, more like a loser-uncle-who-breaks-down-and-cries-every-year-at-the-family-Christmas-party sort of way. This makes insurance papers read like *Treasure Island*. —Not Josh (Sea of Seed, 355 9th St., Windom, MN 56101)

SHREDDING PAPER, #15, \$4, 8 ½ x 11, glossy cover, 114 pgs. The meat and potatoes of this rather utilitarian zine is its sizable cataloging of punk/indie record

reviews. In fact, it almost seems more like a catalogue than a zine — the reviews are no-nonsense and fairly uniformly sized and there's lots and lots of them. Kind of like packing peanuts. The few columns and features there are seem like mere garnish. Which is not to say they're not worth reading; this issue includes an interview with Mary Wilson of the Supremes and an interview with an "internet cartoonist" named David Rees who takes corporate-looking clip art and drops in hilarious little dialog balloons that skewer the dumbed-down mindset of this country's consumer populace. There's also a rant/interview snippet showing how comic/phone company huckster/ex-*Monday Night Football* jabber-jaw Dennis Miller is making jingoistic hate-mongering seem hip and clever. All in all, not bad stuff — certainly informative, but a bit dry for my liking. Ah, I guess we can't all act like jackasses in print.

—Aphid Peewit (PO Box 2271, San Rafael, CA 94912)

SINKHOLE, #9, \$1 or stamps, 7 x 8 ½, photocopied, 26 pgs. The staff of *Sinkhole* is made up of a guy, his wife, and their five-year-old son, who drew the cover art. It has interviews with the Casualties and the Voodoo Glow Skulls, so that should give you a clue as to

what kind of music they like. I thought the interviews were pretty good even though I personally can't stand either of those bands. On the positive tip, they love the GC5 and that's alright, alright by me (Radio Birdman reference, duh). If only they liked the Animals as much as they like animals...

—Not Josh (Sinkhole Zine, 2105 W. 19th St., Bradenton, FL 34205)

SKIN DEEP #1, \$1, 4 x 5 ½, photocopied, 30 pgs. Oh, my. The challenges of racist skinheads overcoming their homoerotic tendencies and alienation at the end of the day is hilariously captured in this mighty little poetry zine. It's all hand-written by several people, has an illustration of a skinhead with a tear on the back, and includes this gem that is worthy of verbatim quotation: "My name is Fucking ~~Alex~~ Anonymous. I think that Nazi was just short for 'nobody understands me.' / Why are there so many dudes in this porno? / Don't snap my braces/ It hurts inside and it makes me think you don't like me/ Even though I hate you/ Why does rap have to be so good? Please don't tell my friends about any of this." If you like laughing, this'll do it. —Todd (Skin Deep, PO Box 13093, Mpls, MN 55414)

STIR KRAZY, #5, \$5, 8 1/2 x 11, color copied, 22 pgs.

Pros: The writing is pretty much top shelf, lacking that whole "the world is going to hell and it's all your fault because you're not doing this and this and this" holier-than-thou attitude that a lot of anarchist zines seem to have, while at the same time maintaining an edge that separates it from some hippie zine. The "Questions to Ask Christians" section was hilarious even though it was too short. There is a really well written article about the death penalty and it makes some good points that I never thought about. Cons: Five bucks for twenty-two pages? Great Caesar's ghost! Okay, if this was black and white and folded in half, it would be fucking dynamite, but as it is, I can only recommend this if you have five bucks to spare.

—Not Josh (Stir Krazy, PO Box 25148, Rochester, NY 14445)

TALES OF A TRAVELLING PANTY SALESMAN, #1, \$1, 4 1/4 x 5 1/2, photocopied, 80 pgs.

These really are the tales of a travelling panty salesman. Lew, the kid who does the zine *Vinyl A Go Go*, toured with Dirt Bike Annie last summer, and on said tour, he sold DBA panties, thus making him a travelling panty salesman. These are his tales. As a whole, this is basically a long tour diary, but Lew is a pretty good storyteller, and he manages to keep things interesting and engaging. *Tales* is definitely better than most tour diaries I've read. I charged right through this zine and really liked it. My only complaint is that he's pretty harsh on the South. Being that I'm from the South, this hits an irrational nerve with me. As my brother would say, "Fuckin' Yankee. Take I-95 north." As I would say, don't let the image of any place cloud your view of that place. The South is just like the rest of the US: weird and stupid, friendly and hateful, tolerant and racist, and amazing in its own way. So there's my digression. Overall, though, this is an awesome zine. —Sean (Vinyl A Go Go, 135 Wapwallopen Rd., Nescopeck, PA 18635)

THE PORNOGRAPHIC FLABBERGASTED EMUS, #4 and #5, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 48 pgs. each

This is a serialized novel about a fairly unsuccessful college punk band from the midwest. It's told from the perspective of each of the four band members, all of whom are pretty intelligent in that I've-been-in-college-for-three-years-and-now-I-know-a-shitload-of-useless-trivia way, and all of whom are nutty and drunk enough to make the

stories fun. Issue #4 has chapters 9-11. The band opens for a cheesy, major label band, they attend peace protests, they debate working class politics as it relates to linguistics, they survive the holidays, and they resurrect an old, forgotten punk band and play a show with them. In between, a lot of hijinks ensue, the most memorable of which has to do with a performance art piece based on an urban myth that Keith Richards and Mick Jagger ate a candy bar out of Marianne Faithfull's box. Issue #5 has chapters 12-14. Two members of the band stream porn in through the university's video projection system, a friendly fascist named Il Duce moves into their house, the fascist becomes the band's manager, which leads to all kinds of moral dilemmas, and a revolutionary organization is formed around the love of toast. I've been following the Emus since the first issue, and I'm hooked. I get excited when a new issue comes in the mail. I usually stop what I'm doing and sit down and read it right away. And the cool thing about this being a serialized novel is that reading it gets to be a long, enjoyable process. If I had the whole book in one unit, I would've read through it in a weekend and been done with it. As it stands, I only get three chapters every so often, so every few months, I'm transported back to a small, Ohio college town where I get to hang out with Alexander Depot, George Jah, Funnybear, and Theodorable and watch their beautiful train wreck.

—Sean (Wred Fright, PO Box 770332, Lakewood, OH 44107)

TIGHT PANTS/ SNAKE PIT, #9.99/27, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 22 pgs.

This split is done *Snake Pit* style with a strip from both Maddy and Ben for each day for the month of December. Maddy takes her finals, tells her mom the history of the labor movement in an hour, rediscovers the joys of box wine, and drinks a lot of fluids. Ben gets a crush, does some laundry, moves into a shed, and goes to a roller skating party. There's something great about this because you see the fun and the excitement, but you also see that they do all the boring, crazy, stupid things that you do, too. For Maddy: This is Cocoa Puffs and Capt. Crunch: Both delicious on their own and mixed together! —Megan (Maddy, 296-A Nassau Ave #3L, Brooklyn, NY 11222; Ben, PO Box 49447, Austin, TX, 78765)

WEIRD N.J., #20, heavy, 8 1/2 x 11, heavy-stock, 95 pgs. I wasn't sure what to expect with

this one, I mean "weird" is a pretty wide umbrella that can be used for so many things out of the ordinary. Somehow, they seem to cover it all within one biannual zine. There's so much information in there, it took me a few days to read through the whole thing. I was never tired of it, though. The topics range from Satanic cults, ghost sightings, insane asylums, big rock sculptures in people's yards, local folklore, a tree with some junk thrown in it, and even more. The sources, length and format are all varied, too. A good deal are put together by Mark and Mark, the two main guys who put it out, but lots of information comes from readers. Some are well-researched, while others border on the "my brother had this friend who went into the woods drunk" type stories, but all are entertaining. My favorite section was Local Heroes and Villains, which reminded me of my own neighborhood heroes: the twin witches and sideways man. The best in the whole issue was a picture of a gravestone with the inscription, "I told you I was sick." On the base of the headstone it says, "And get off my grave." I laughed forever on that one. So much weirdness for such a little state! This is only sold in the Garden State itself, so either write or check out their website. I can't wait for my next trip to visit relatives. I've already started a list of weirdness to go find.

—Megan (Weird N. J., PO Box 1346, Bloomfield, NJ, 07003)

WRESTLING THEN & NOW, #149, \$5, 8 1/2 x 11, photocopied, 27 pgs.

I've loved wrestling ever since I was a kid. I'd watch it with dad on Sundays and practice moves on my brother the rest of the week. *WT&N* does a good job of pulling back the curtain a bit, to display the truer inner workings of wrestling, showing that, at the more independent levels, it still has tons of heart (like wrestlers donating their talents for a breast cancer benefit). I enjoyed their overall tone. The editors and readers express a desire for the WWE to get back to men grappling instead of baseless story lines (like necrophilia), wanting championship belts to mean something again, and to reel back some of the far-reaching entertainment that's been incorporated into "sports entertainment." In this issue are several remembrances to Kurt Hennig, "Mr. Perfect," who died a hotel room in Florida under no suspicious circumstances. What's refreshing is that for a sport that thrives on short term memory (mainly so wrestlers can go from heels to heroes in mere weeks),

WT&N gives credit where it's due, establishes a bit of historical perspective along the way, and gives you new information. (Like the fact that Chris Jericho was in band called Love Weasel.) Definitely the work of hard-working fans.

—Todd (WT&N, PO Box 640471, Oakland Gardens Station, Flushing, NY 11365)

YOU IDIOT, #2, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 44 pgs.

You Idiot debates the obvious. It makes no claims to do otherwise. It makes fun of drug commercials (because of course buying a quarter bag doesn't support terrorists. It supports the hippie who grows the weed. Paying taxes supports terrorists), advertising-laden video games, Hulk Hogan's music career, the He-Man message board, and various dollar store items. And, though it's all obvious, it's fun to read. You can read Nate's rants and think, yeah, I thought of that, too. Anti-drug commercials *are* idiotic. It is better to laugh at the Hulkster than to laugh with him. And so on. It gives you a nice sense of superiority to know that you're smarter than so much of this stuff that's being pumped into your brain. It's fun to take the time to sit back and ridicule it. And that's the cool part of this zine. You're not exactly reading Noam Chomsky, but it is an intelligent conversation about the absurd world around us.

—Sean (Nate Gangelhoff, PO Box 8995, Mpls, MN 55408)

ZEN AND THE ART OF BROWNIE BAKING, #1, \$1, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, photocopied, 32 pgs.

This zine really is about baking brownies (and no, it's not a euphemism for taking a shit, as in, "P-U. Josh is baking brownies in the bathroom again.") There are recipes and manifestos to baking brownies as a path to revolution. I would probably think that the kid who writes this zine is a total kook, but I actually met him and hung out with him at the New Orleans Book Fair last year, so I can say for sure, he *is* a total kook. But in a good way. He's funny and intelligent and has learned to not take himself too seriously. All of this shows in his cool zine. It's worth picking up.

—Sean (Josh Russel, MB 2558 Brandeis U., 415 South St., Waltham, MA 02454)

Reviews of Genetic Disorder, Giant Haystacks, No One Touches the Dream Team, Rockbottom, Burn Your Guitar #666/Baby I Think I Love You, and Chicken-Head Records didn't fit in this issue. You can read them at:

<www.razorcake.com>.





A New World in Our Hearts

Edited by Roy San Filippo, paperback, 139 pgs.

This book is a collection of essays written by members of the Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, and while it seems like while the intention of this book is to argue for anarchy as a viable alternative to traditional authoritarian governments, they also show why it would not work as such. First of all, the key to anarchy working on a mass level would be that every single member of that particular society is dedicated to putting the needs of everyone else ahead of his own. If you take a look at our society and culture, sadly, that is not the case, and it does not look like this situation will occur anytime in the near future. I'm not saying that everyone is stupid and greedy and self-centered (even though that's true a frightening majority of the time), but the sad truth of the matter is that some people are not smarter than their televisions, and what's worse is that they don't care and probably never will.

Second, and this is an extension of the first point, is that activist groups that could work together towards a common goal usually don't. An example given in this book is a protest attended by a black bloc and a women's movement in which both groups stuck to their own agendas instead of showing solidarity. They put all their effort into making their individual presence felt and the protest turned out to be a disaster, and was referred to as "useless" by a member of the black bloc.

Another glaring problem with social reform movements such as anarchy is that the original intentions of the movement are sometimes corrupted by leaders who arise within it. Take Russia, for example. The Marxist utopian ideals of a worker-controlled government were dashed as soon as the movement's leaders realized the power that they had and Russia became a dictatorship, just the opposite of the intentions of the Bolshevik revolution.

Maybe I'm coming across as too negative, too pessimistic. I believe that a society based on

ing is possible, but I don't exactly think that one big light bulb will go off over the heads of the oppressed people of the world. I think that maybe that's where this book and this movement failed. It seems like everyone involved was trying to change the world overnight. The real changes can only occur with evolution, not revolution. —Not Josh (AK Press, 674-A 23rd St., Oakland, CA 94612-1163)

Devil's Midnight

by Yuri Kapralov, hardcover, 292 pgs

Any book that prominently displays the comment, "reminiscent of fellow slav Nicolai Gogol," is going to attract my attention. Same goes for books about the Russian Civil War — an oftentimes overlooked (by Americans) and insanely violent part of Russian history. Plus, this book is not just about the Civil War — in which the Whites and the Reds competed to see who could commit the most atrocities — it's about Satanism. And somehow, it works. Of course, Russia is a country with a definite devil fascination, which might strike some Americans as odd, but hey, MOST things about Russia strike Americans as odd. Hell, I was just there and there were few things that did not seem bizarre — including a Paul McCartney concert on Red Square during which he sang Back in the USSR not once, but TWICE. But I digress.

Kapralov creates a great bizarre tale, very much in the tradition of Gogol's earlier folktales. (Note to punks: Read Gogol.) Lots of dreams, satanic rituals, and bloodshed. Great characters. Plus, Kapralov understands that people often end up fighting in wars almost by accident. All of the characters seem to fall into the middle of a huge mess. No questions of ideology here. Sometimes Kapralov overuses clichés, but most of the time it's just the product of his folk tale style.

Devil's Midnight is just one of a number of great books Akashic has published lately. Putting out underground non-fiction is hard enough. Putting out underground fiction is almost impossible. I know enough punks, myself included, who read way more non-fiction than fiction. *Devil's Midnight* and Akashic Books are a good reason for that to change.

—Maddy (Akashic Books, P.O. Box 1456, NY, NY 10009)

Obsolete Communism:

The Left-Wing Alternative

by Daniel & Gabriel Cohn-Bendit, paperback, 239 pgs.

In May 1968, students in a suburb of France revolted against capitalism, bourgeoisie social norms, and conservative education policies. The revolt spread through universities and factories throughout France. General strikes, barricades in the streets, having sex in the Sorbonne (a major university in Paris) and more! Unlike in the United States, in France there was a very real chance that the government would resign or collapse.

Although he labelled himself an anarcho-Marxist and said he despised all leaders, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, or "Danny the Red" as he was more commonly known, was the defacto leader of the protesting students, and of the entire movement itself. *Obsolete Communism* is Danny the Red and his brother Gabriel's account of the events of May 68.

The first half of the book has an irresistibly exciting tone — no surprise, as it was written

when Danny was only 23, just five weeks after the uprising. (Note: If you have never read anything about May '68, you might want to first read a short article outlining the basic events because a basic knowledge of the chronology of events is assumed.) The Cohn-Bendit brothers express their distaste for modern middle class life: "The petty life of yesterday was left behind; gone the dingy office, the boredom in a tiny flat, with a tiny television and, outside, a tiny road with a tiny car; gone the repetition, the studied gestures, the regimentation and the lack of joy and desire," they write.

Unfortunately, the second half of the book is, at times, little more than a rushed critique of leaders, the Communist Party (and their role in repressing the movement), and the usual anti-Trotsky sentiments. The brothers take the position that the working class (and all oppressed people for that matter) have a natural understanding of their own oppression and do not need to be educated about their condition. While it is certainly true that — to take a modern example — a McDonalds worker knows he or she is being screwed, it definitely does often take something extra to transform general anger about one's shitty life into a revolutionary movement. Most revolutions, contrary to what Danny and Gabriel would have us believe, do involve some level of organization and education.

Despite all this, I recommend this book not only to people interested in the May '68 events, but also to everyone involved in the anti-globalization movement. Whether you end up agreeing or not, this book raises many crucial basic questions about the relationship of middle class students to workers and about the nature of modern revolution in general.

—Maddy (AK Press, 674-A 23rd St., Oakland, CA 94612-1163)

